



A decorative rectangular border with a repeating floral and vine motif surrounds the text.

CHILDREN'S BOOK
COLLECTION



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LOS ANGELES



Frontispiece?



Yamousa; the poor Negro.

See Page 43.

T. Walker
616317
Yostwood

MORE
MINOR MORALS;

OR,

AN INTRODUCTION TO THE WINTER FAMILY:

WITH

AUNT ELEANOR'S STORIES

INTERSPERSED.



From education, as the leading cause,
The public character its colour draws;
Thence the prevailing manners take their cast,
Extravagant or sober, loose or chaste. COWPER.



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PREFACE.

SOMETHING by way of Preface appears to be so much the established mode of introducing a reader to a new book, whatever the importance or insignificance of it may be, that the writer of the following sheets would not presume to disregard it; yet, as she feels that the pages of this Essay on "Minor Morals" is too simple to require any argument prefixed to its Chapters, she thinks she cannot do better than entreat the indulgence of the Public, in consideration alone of the motive which has occasioned it.

To have these pages placed beside those of a More, a Trimmer, a Barbauld,

or a Wakefield,—conscious as she is what must be the result of a comparison with the least productions of any of those distinguished writers,—would indeed alarm her. To be recognized only as a twinkling light in the regions of truth, will fully satisfy her ambition ; well knowing that the feeble ray which proceeds from it has its degree of usefulness.

If, on the whole, the critics should not be displeased with this Essay on “ Minor Morals,” it will be continued ; but if, on the contrary, they should frown at it, the writer will not merit the character of arrogant obtrusiveness ; and their acquaintance with Aunt Eleanor and the Winter Family will terminate, like that of many other people, with their first introduction to each other.

INTRODUCTION

TO THE

WINTER FAMILY.

MISS ELEANOR and Sir Edwin Winter, between whose ages was a difference of twenty years, were the eldest and youngest child of Sir Roger and Lady Winter. Lady Winter died when Sir Edwin, her only son, was but a few months old; but her loss was well supplied by the tender attention of his eldest sister, on whom the care of her father's family then devolved; and Miss Eleanor Winter became so occupied in a routine of domestic duties, and in the avocations of the maternal character, which the infant state of her brother had induced her to assume, that she never once cherished the thought of entering into any separate engagement for herself: not indeed that she was destitute of ad-

mirers, on the contrary ; for, being a very sweet tempered, agreeable woman, she had often been solicited by neighbouring gentlemen, who had constant opportunities of knowing her, to resign the care of her father's house in which she acquitted herself with so much correctness, for one of her own : but her attachment to Sir Edwin, the child of her adoption, whom she considered as a precious legacy from a beloved mother, was so strong that she could not be persuaded to quit him.

Thus the spring and summer of life succeeded each other, and glided imperceptibly by, while Miss Eleanor Winter, with the best grace imaginable, voluntarily became fixed, the maiden aunt, in her family, and an example to all females who have passed the season of youth, and are arrived at that period when the illiberal and *illbred* are pleased to denominate them “ old maids,”—a term of vulgar sneer, which many ladies exceedingly dread, though it conveys no ideas of real shame or disgrace : and it is hoped that the amiable conduct and character of Miss Eleanor Winter may induce some other ladies to imitate her example ; and, should similar circumstances of prudence and kindred

affection dispose them, like her, to continue unmarried, to reconcile them even to the epithet of "old maid."

As the truth of that observation is readily admitted, and may be early comprehended, which declares happiness to be not the exclusive allotment of one state more than another, I would persuade my young readers to act in conformity with such conviction when felt, and never, in direct opposition to it, to indulge the too common prejudice against a single life, but to remember, that in every state we are only happy in proportion to the efforts we make to be faithful stewards of the talents assigned us by God to be improved.

Sir Roger Winter died soon after his only son Edwin had entered the university, leaving six children, four of whom had been several years suitably established in life, and Miss Winter continued mistress of her brother's house until he married,—an event which took place three years after he quitted college.

Sir Edwin Winter had been acquainted with the lady who was the object of his choice from infancy; and Miss Morgan, daughter of the rector of Burrall, was in all respects deserving

his affection : like her Edwin, she had early been deprived of her mother, and was greatly indebted to the humane attentions of Miss Winter, who, feeling a real compassion and tenderness for the orphan state, considered all had claims upon her good offices who were placed by Providence in it, and came within her observation and reach.

By degrees, Miss Morgan was established a constant morning visitor at Burrall Castle, and frequently received instruction from Miss Winter with Sir Edwin, whose favourite companion she soon grew; thus, constantly being associated together, and drawing their principles and knowledge from a common source, they became attached, and the fittest partners for each other. Miss, or rather Mrs. Eleanor, Winter was fully of this opinion, and Sir Edwin's union with Miss Morgan took place at the period mentioned, with the entire approbation of all parties.

After Mrs. Eleanor Winter had settled her brother she proposed to him to quit the Castle, and retire to the Grange, a small farm-house retaining its original name, which from time to time had been prettily improved, and was al-

ways kept to accommodate friends or connexions, who wished to pass a few summer months in the country without the expense of a large establishment. To this proposal, however, neither Sir Edwin or Lady Winter would listen; for they felt the society of Mrs. Eleanor an augmentation of their happiness, which they valued too highly to relinquish when they might continue to enjoy it.

The well-ordered family of Sir Edwin Winter rolled on in a regular round of domestic duties, social intercourse, and rural pleasures; and Sir Edwin was justly considered a happy man, since the common anxieties incident to this mortal state were all the disquietudes he felt. The period, however, at length arrived when the calm scene, on which he had so long dwelt with delight and habitual gratitude, was to receive some change, and he felt it well calculated to remind him of what continued prosperity is too prone to teach us to forget, the instability of the completest earthly enjoyment. Sir Edwin lost Lady Winter in childbirth, in the twelfth year of his marriage, and was left, with the infant who survived her, the father of eight children. This event was a trying cala-

mity, and could not but be severely felt by Sir Edwin. The sorrows of life he had, until this period, known only in theory; but, as he was yet aware that they were real, and to be expected some time or other as the natural lot of humanity, he did not therefore allow himself to dwell only on what he had lost, but reflected on the indulgence of Heaven, who had granted him so long a period of uninterrupted happiness, and thus acquired that spirit of grateful resignation, which rendered him sensible to the further blessings in store for him.

At this afflicting period, he found an efficient auxiliary in his amiable and attached sister Eleanor, on whom the maternal duties again devolved, and in which she willingly engaged.

It was a fortunate circumstance for Sir Edwin's children that Mrs. Eleanor was healthy and cheerful; in truth, though turned of fifty, she discovered none of the ordinary marks of declining years. A temperate and regular life, joined to a mild and even temper and an improved and religious mind, had preserved her spirits and animated glow of countenance to a late season: and as the beautiful blossoms of spring, when moved only by light breeze^s

will remain to charm the delighted eye after the period when we expect them to fall, so animation of feature, and even bloom of youth, if not rudely agitated by the rough blasts of violent passions, will often endure beyond the usual season of their continuance.

Of Sir Edwin's family, the four eldest were girls, the other four boys: these were divided into two parties,—the former in the school-room, the latter in the nursery.

Mrs. Eleanor Winter had hitherto, as a matter of amusing pursuit to herself, supplied the place of a governess to the little girls; but she was now under the necessity of resigning them to another lady, since she felt the nature of her duties was changed, and, from the passive inmate, that she was again become the active and sole mistress of her brother's house; in which capacity, the general superintendance of his family, with proper regard to company, became incompatible with that degree of particular attention which she had before leisure to pay her nieces, and which was now more than ever requisite for the advancement of their education.

She accordingly used her discretion, and

engaged a Mrs. Pontin to supply her place ; a gentlewoman in all respects well qualified for a governess to Sir Edwin's children. She possessed Christian principles, was well bred, well informed, although but *moderately accomplished*, (in the modern acceptation of the word,) with a just, kind, and steady temper. Attached to the society of children she engaged in the instruction of Sir Edwin's, rather as it furnished occupation agreeable to her disposition, than from either the desire or necessity of pecuniary emolument ; since she was sufficiently independent in the possession of a small income for her moderate wants, had she been desirous of an inactive life ; but this was what she sought to avoid, for, having lost her own family, she felt the misfortune of having done so less acutely in the bosom of another, where, in return for her care and mental exertion, she received that kindness and respectful attention which are always soothing to the children of vicissitude, and particularly so to the wounded feelings of a person in Mrs. Pontin's circumstances, deprived, as she was, of the natural objects of her affection.

Mrs. Eleanor Winter made it a rule to visit

her nieces every day after Sir Edwin's dinner hour when there was no ceremonious company. In the summer she walked with them, and in the winter evenings made one of their circle round the school-room fire ; on these occasions it became a practice, for which she had the best precedents, to relate them stories or anecdotes as they happened to arise out of their conversations.

At six o'clock all was order and silence in the school-room, for the children, at that hour, anxiously expected the entrance of their aunt Eleanor.

It was early in the summer season when Lady Winter died ; and every fine evening her family used to walk, sometimes direct, at other times round, to a gentle hill, on the summit of which was a beautiful oak, beneath whose shade a double row of seats had been erected by Sir Edwin for their accommodation : here, on a sultry evening, they were sure to catch the lightest breeze that fanned the air ; and it became the favourite spot where they would listen to their aunt's conversation and stories, and enjoy the remarks of each other. In this manner was the sorrow of the little:

Winters for the loss of their mother beguiled, and they insensibly transferred their entire affection to Mrs. Eleanor. Mamma was, indeed, remembered with extreme tenderness, and spoken of with a calm pensiveness, which, in subjects so young, could only proceed from having her place so happily supplied. In the manners of the departed, and the present friend, no contrast struck their youthful observation; there appeared a continuation of the same spirit: mamma and aunt were alike tender and affectionate, reluctant to reprove, and prompt to forgive, the venial transgressions of childhood, yet equally firm in impressing, by due correction, the sad consequences of a wilful, and unrepented breach of the positive laws of God: and thus, as no new or painful feelings arose in the minds of the children, they were not reminded of their loss, and soon reposed themselves altogether on the bosom of their aunt.

PART I.

Mrs. Eleanor Winter, accompanied by her four nieces and their governess, Mrs. Pontin, had reached the favourite seat under the oak, when she drew out her watch to see the time they had been walking from the castle. On perceiving it, Miss Winter observed, "Aunt, you told me one day that your watch had a history belonging to it, and I wish you would be so good as to acquaint us what it is." The other children joined in the request of their eldest sister, and Mrs. Eleanor thus willingly complied.

RESTITUTION,

OR, THE POWER OF CONSCIENCE.

THIS watch, my children, which you have often admired, has been an object that has roused very base passions, and stimulated to very wicked conduct.

The watch is a family one, and has been for a century the property of one individual or other in our's. It was made for my maternal grandfather, by a person whose name, as you may see, is engraven upon it ; and he gave it to his second son, on leaving home to be educated at a certain public school. My uncle was like your brother Roger, and many other boys, very ambitious to possess a watch like his papa's ; and my grandfather made him happy by presenting him this favourite watch, with many injunctions to take care of it ; to all of which my uncle attended, and the whole time it remained in his possession he wound it up punctually every night, and afterwards hung it on a hook over the mantle piece in his bed-chamber.

From amongst a number of school-fellows, my uncle had selected four or five whom he considered as more immediately his friends ; and these young gentlemen, out of school hours, were constantly with him either in the air or in his room. The watch had often been an object of admiration, but never, as my uncle suspected, of envy or covetousness : however, before he was dressed one morning, on looking to ascertain the hour, he missed it: sur-

prised, rather than alarmed, he at first thought he must have mislaid it; but, convinced, on reflection, that he had not done so, he was forced to conclude that some person or persons had stolen it.

Complaint was then made to Dr. Syntax, and a rigorous scrutiny took place amongst his pupils, in order to discover the thief; he, however, proved himself an adroit one, for he eluded detection, and nothing transpired to create the least suspicion whom he could be. A female servant was indeed glanced at, but more from some petty incorrectness on a former occasion than from any proof against her in the present robbery, and she was accordingly dismissed Dr. Syntax's family; suffering, on this occasion, the consequence of a violated integrity, in the same manner as the liar does, whom all fear to credit when he happens to speak truth; so difficult does it become to regain the confidence of our friends and associates when once we have deceived them. Conscious of this fact, and thoroughly convinced that vicious habits would be less general than they are, if parents were to treat the first deviation from Christian principle, which is too often

passed off slightly as a pardonable error, the repetition of which may be prevented by lenity and indulgence, with the greatest severity; you must expect, my dear little girls, that I shall always be “extreme to mark what is done amiss.” The unaffected regret expressed by my uncle’s particular friends for the loss of his favourite watch left him no reason to doubt their perfect integrity, and he remained two years amongst them after the event without entertaining the slightest suspicion of any one. Artfully and successfully, however, as the thief concealed his crime at school, the period arrived when his guilty conscience would no longer allow him to remain a passive listener to its reproaches, but forced him to a confession of his crime, and to make restitution of the purloined property.

This happened ten years after the perpetration of the robbery, when my uncle, having married and settled in the country, had ceased all regret for his watch, which he considered irrecoverably lost. It was then very unexpectedly sent by the stage-coach in a small box, which also inclosed a letter that I can repeat *verbatim*, (that is, exactly,) and is as follows:—

SIR,

With a deep sense of shame and guilt, I beg to offer you all the reparation at present in my power, for an injury I formerly did you. You will doubtless recollect losing, when at school, a favourite watch, which, long the *memento* of an act I blush to recollect, I now send by the * * * * stage, and shall be glad to know that it reaches you in safety.

An earlier restitution of your property, for reasons which I cannot now explain, has been impracticable, or I would gladly have made it in justice to you, and as some degree of relief to my own feelings, which must, alas, continue wounded and unsatisfied, until my pride will permit me to declare, what you have a right to know,—my name.

I have written to Dr. Syntax to clear the character of his disgraced servant, and trust that my crime will not have attached to her the ruin of her prospects as a servant; the conviction that it had, would indeed be a miserable aggravation of the feelings I must necessarily experience.

I can only intreat your pardon for the injury I did you, and beg the favour of a line, directed

to A. Z. * * * * Coffee-house, London, merely to say, that the purloined watch has reached you in safety. I am, sir, your unworthy old schoolfellow. PENITENS.

In this manner my uncle recovered his watch. The thief, you see, detained it several years, yet could feel no peace until he had restored it to its lawful possessor.

I wish this short relation may make a proper impression on you, little girls, and teach you to be content with what is properly your own, and to check the least rising of inclination to possess any thing which belongs to another; because that inclination indulged will tempt you, as circumstances entice and opportunity presents itself, to be guilty of as great crimes as was my uncle's schoolfellow. Should any of you, however, be so unhappy as to commit a crime similar in nature or degree to the one I have related, lose no time in confessing it to God and imploring his pardon, and then to the person you have injured. In doing this, you will doubtless feel both pain and shame, for these feelings are inseparable from guilt; but they are nothing compared to what you must endure from the concealment of your of-

fence. God is ever merciful ; and, if you are truly penitent, and supplicate Him, He will grant you, for Jesus Christ's sake, such a portion of His Holy Spirit, as will, in future, enable you to be more watchful over your hearts, and circumspect in your actions ; and then may you hope, in time, to regain, in a great measure, the confidence and affection of the relative, friend, or companion, you were tempted to injure.

But, to proceed with the history of the watch : my uncle afterwards made it a present to his second brother, who took it with him to the East Indies, whither he was ordered to join his regiment ; and, three years afterwards, as he was on his passage home for the recovery of his health, it again became an object of temptation to an unprincipled boy of talents, whose little history I will also give you.

THE BOY OF TALENTS.

TOM Logging, was the son of an honest man, who was steward to the captain of an Indiaman, and had the misfortune to lose his father before he could be sensible of the loss he had sustained. Captain Cable, however, was a worthy character, and felt that regard for his steward which good principles are commonly remarked to produce towards a meritorious old servant; and, in consequence, he promised him, on his death-bed, that he would take care of little Tom.

The captain kept his word; and, on his arrival in England, sought the child, and placed him in a charity school, under the particular charge of the master, at whose table he boarded him.

Tom Logging was a very pretty, good-natured boy, and naturally clever, but he was idle and unprincipled. It is true, that he could repeat his catechisms more perfectly than any boy in the school; and, from an excellent me-

mory, was always able to inform the old schoolmaster on a Sunday the text, as well as much of the matter of the sermon. He made, however, no practical use of the excellent instructions with which his quickness enabled him so easily to furnish his mind.

Tom Logging had, amongst other talents, a turn for music, and the gift of a fine, clear, sweet voice, which was always distinctly heard in the chaunting above all the other boys. Old Strapem, the master, was proud of Tom, and used frequently to say he would one day make as great a man as Lord Howe. Incompetent judges often presume to utter very bold and unwarrantable predictions ; and the old schoolmaster's could only, in human probability, have proved true of his favourite Tom, but by his teaching him that *to know* was only the first part of a Christian's duty, and that *to do* was the perfection of it. This truth had, it must be declared, never been thought upon by Strapem as forming any part of his duty, which he considered was all included in making the lads good scholars, according to his confined ideas ; and these were bounded by his own slender acquirements.

As Tom Logging's destination for the sea life was known to the school-master, he had him taught some good sea-songs, which he used to delight in making the boy sing before his *particular* friends,—the overseers and parish officers, at their too frequent meetings: these would raise poor Tom's vanity by their praises, and reward his performance by giving him strong beer and punch until his head ached and he was half tipsy: while Strapem, at the conclusion of each of Tom's songs, would vociferate his eulogium, and repeat the flattering prediction, "Tom will be a second Lord Howe, whoever lives to see it;" and thus clever Tom, with the talents he possessed, and the protection of Captain Cable, was considered certain of future prosperity,—a circumstance which rendered him a privileged person in school.

Tom made a constant practice of pilfering from his master's garden and cellar, and of delivering to his school-fellows whatever he so procured, and then sharing the booty equally amongst them; and thus, while he stole with one hand he gave with the other; he was the *honorable*

thief, and the boy of enterprize and popularity in the school.

Old Strapem was not ignorant of Tom's predatory tricks, but he winked at them because he was so smart a lad, such an excellent scholar, and, above all doubt, a Lord Howe in embryo. Thus was Tom Logging flattered and caressed when he ought to have been punished, and so was kept ignorant of practical virtue, and felt not that total want of honesty was either shame or disgrace to him in the little world—his school.

At twelve years old, Captain Cable, who had retired from the sea, sent Tom on-board an Indiaman commanded by his son, who was fully inclined to take care of his interest; he had soon, however, the mortification to find out that all his father's kindness and intended favour to Tom Logging was frustrated. Unhappy boy! I have heard my uncle say that you might hear his name called twenty times in a day, for he soon became as great a favorite with the *worst* part of Captain Cable's crew, as he had before been with old Strapem and his ill-instructed boys; but I must has-

ten to his fate, for which I perceive you anxious.

My uncle usually hung his watch by the side of a small sliding window, termed in an Indian, a scuttle, and under which was fixed one of the ship's boats: in the boat was kept a large sea bird, called an Albatross; and the sailors and Tom, in going often into the boat, either to feed this bird or amuse themselves with it, discovered the position of the watch, when a plan was laid to steal it away, and the robbery was to be performed by the clever Tom Logging, the *embryo* Lord Howe.

My uncle had been some time asleep, and his servant was preparing to go to bed, when he saw a hand and arm reached through the scuttle window, and in the act of groping for the watch. The man angrily struck it, declaring at the same time that he knew whose it was; the thief in reply sneeringly imitated the servant's Scotch accent, by which he betrayed himself beyond a doubt. He then proceeded to a further and larger window, when the servant laid hold of him, and nearly dragged him into the cabin: now the noise and scuffle

roused my uncle, who commanded silence, and the servant allowed the thief to go.

Tom Logging then scrambled to the last window in the round-house, where the chains ceased, and there was nothing on which to rest either his feet or hands; he was consequently obliged to support himself by clinging to the ship's side, which proved a precarious hold. This was not the route intended to have been taken when the watch should be stolen; but, alarmed by detection, Tom Logging scrambled away as fast as he could, to avoid further observation, but was too much frightened to consider where he should find himself. The wicked instigators of this ill-fated boy hearing a noise, were on-deck, devising how they could possibly rescue him from his perilous hold; when a great and sudden roll of the ship forced him from it into the sea. "Lord have mercy on me," my uncle's servant heard him distinctly pronounce, as well as the name of one of his associates.—"A man overboard!" resounded through the ship, and compassion was awakened, and all were prompt to render assistance; but nothing could be done to save the miserable youth, for the wind was high,

the sea rough, and the moon shone awfully on the watery grave of Tom Logging; and thus prematurely ended the life of this boy of *perverted* talents. To possess talents, my dear little girls, is full of danger, without the foundation of Christian *knowledge* and Christian *principles*, which alone can regulate their use, and direct them to their proper object,—that of adorning the Christian character, and rendering it more agreeable and more recommendatory to others.

On my uncle's return to England he related to me this account, exactly, as to the circumstances of it, as I have now told it to you; but the watch was reserved for further adventure before it reposed in my care; for my uncle, two years afterwards, embarked with another regiment to the West Indies, where he unfortunately died of the yellow fever. His faithless servant then seized it, and said, it had been given him by his master before his death as a keep sake: however, the colonel of the regiment, having taken charge of my uncle's effects, claimed and secured the watch, which he knew to be a favourite and a family one;

and sent it safely to my father, who, at my request, allowed me to be the future guardian of it.

Thus have I satisfied you, my dears, that my watch, which now warns us that the evening is closing, has no very trifling history belonging to it; and, as we should endeavour to turn every object that we allow to engage our attention to some advantage, I will repeat to you, as we walk, a pretty little poem on a watch, written by one of the most learned, yet most humble and Christian characters,* that ever any country produced, and which you will do well to learn by heart.

ON A WATCH.

While this gay toy attracts thy sight,
 Thy reason let it warn,
 And seize, my dear, that rapid time,
 That never must return:
 If idly lost, no art or care
 The blessing can restore;
 And Heaven exacts a strict account
 For ev'ry mispent hour.
 Short is our longest day of life,
 And soon its prospects end,

* Mrs. Elizabeth Carter.

Yet on that day's uncertain date,
 Eternal years depend.
 Yet equal to our being's aim
 The space to virtue giv'n;
 And ev'ry minute well improv'd,
 Secures an age in Heaven.

The party liked this poem, and promised it should be copied into their poetical repository, a custom Mrs. Eleanor had prescribed to her nieces, preparatory to their learning any piece by heart. All then arose and pursued their way home, talking among themselves of the fate of poor Tom Logging: and little Anna Winter, who was nine years old, though seldom venturing a question, was yet a child of much reflection, felt, as she mused on the circumstances of Tom Logging's story, very cold towards her own musical abilities, and as if she could never more receive pleasure in being praised for them.

As Mrs. Eleanor and her party entered the poultry-yard they overtook the nurses with the younger ones, and observed Susan forcibly taking Roger, Sir Edwin's eldest son, from Lion's house, by which he struggled to remain, at the same time speaking angrily to him, for

he was teasing the dog, which disliked children. Lion was a mastiff, kept as a guard upon the poultry-yard, and was always chained during the day, a confinement which did not improve his temper, but tended to render him more snappish and ill natured than he otherwise would have been, and thus made it a dangerous thing for a child to irritate him.

Mrs. Eleanor reproved Roger, and desired he would never again tease Lion; and on his promising not to do so, and to be obedient to Susan, she told him that he should walk with her and his sisters on the morrow evening, when she would tell him a story on the bad consequence of tormenting animals. The family then entered the house, and each party retired to their respective apartments.

EVENING THE SECOND.

NEXT day the Misses Winter waited for six o'clock as anxiously as little Roger did, and were all equipped for walking, with Roger in the midst of them, when Mrs. Eleanor entered the school-room. "Well, Roger," said she, "do you think you will be able to understand

my promised story?" "Oh! yes, aunt," replied he, "I can understand Red-Ridinghood and the Children in the Wood,—can't I, sisters?" The party were shortly at the oak, and no sooner seated under the delightful branches of it, than Mrs. Eleanor acquitted herself of the promise given to Roger the preceding evening.

TEMERITY PUNISHED.

THERE lived at a certain inn in a country town, a maid servant, named Ann. Now there happened to be amongst the sojourners in the inn, a man who kept wild animals for show, and travelled them about from place to place for this purpose, in a large wooden house, which I will describe to you, Roger.

ROGER.

I know aunt what you mean, for I saw such a great wooden house on the road one day when I was walking out, and Susan told me that it was full of wild creatures going to Hay-down fair.

MRS. ELEANOR.

I perceive, Roger, you have a good idea of the contrivance I should have described to

you, and will, therefore, continue my story. Amongst these animals was a tyger of great size and beauty, for which the largest room in the inn was engaged, and where he was secured by a chain about him, fastened to a staple fixed in the wall or floor. You must know, Roger, that the servant Ann took a particular pleasure in teasing this fierce tiger, and made it her practice several times in the day to go and shake her apron at him. The master of the tiger repeatedly warned the girl not to approach him, assuring her that she ran great hazard of her life. She, however, obstinately persisted in her perilous and ungenerous sport, fancying that the chain which fastened the animal would preserve her from his just resentment. In this point, Roger, she was mistaken; for one morning, as she resumed her diversion, the tiger, from repeated irritation, became furious, and made a spring at her with so desperate a force, that he drew out the staple in the floor which confined his chain. You may guess what followed; the tiger seized the obstinate girl, and tore her in pieces. The keeper hearing screams, surmised what had happened; and, on looking into the

room, saw his worst apprehensions realized. Poor Ann was lying dead,—a shocking spectacle; and, appetite and anger gratified, the tiger was growling over the unhappy victim of both.

MISS WINTER.

Oh! my dear aunt, what a very shocking story; I wonder people can be so bold as to keep such fierce creatures, and carry them from place to place.

MRS. ELEANOR WINTER.

The doing so, my dear, affords a certain livelihood; since a natural curiosity makes most persons desirous to see such objects as are found in distant countries, when they can do so for a little money; and the terms of admittance to itinerant exhibitions of wild creatures, are seldom beyond the ability of the day-labourer, as the opportunities afforded of seeing them do not often fall in his way.

MISS ELLEN.

Suppose, aunt, the wild creatures were to

get away from their keeper, what would be the consequence?

MRS. ELEANOR.

From the great care taken, accidents of this kind seldom occur, though they have been known to do so; as was the case a few months ago in England, when a lioness escaped from a travelling ménagerie.

MISS WINTER.

Did it kill any people, aunt?

MRS. ELEANOR.

Providentially not, my dear; but it attacked, what we may conclude came first in the way of it—the leading horses of a stage-coach; and, if my memory does not deceive me, killed one of them before its keeper could again take and confine it. It is hoped such occasional accidents may have a beneficial effect, and teach the proprietors of these wild creatures that their vigilance must never sleep. And now, Roger, if you have thought sufficiently on Ann and the tiger, I hope you have determined to tease

Lion no more, or, indeed, any other animal. As the creatures of God, brutes claim our kindness: but we must neither torment them nor yet bestow upon them too familiar caresses, as many are apt to do, particularly upon dogs. Treat animals with constant humanity, always taking care that they are punctually and properly fed; but admire them only in their proper place. Here Roger declared he would never go near Lion, but always make Susan run away from him.

MRS. ELEANOR.

No, Roger; you must not do that either, for you may pass through the poultry yard twenty times a-day without the least molestation from Lion, provided you neither tease, nor take undue liberties with him, by way of making friends,—both, he would certainly resent; for he will neither be tormented nor bribed.

Here Roger, amidst the promptings of his four sisters, repeated promises of future circumspection in his behaviour to animals; and his present fears seemed a security for his recollection of them.

ELLEN.

I am sure Roger will keep his promise ; and I shall take the hints in your story, too, my dear aunt ; though I am so fond of dogs, I hardly can think ill of any of them, even of surly Lion. Pray, aunt, do you not think dogs the most sensible of all animals.

MRS. ELEANOR.

Many persons are of that opinion, Ellen ; and some, too, who have more particularly studied their characters than I have done : yet, if my experience has not enabled me to pronounce them the most sensible of animals, it has furnished me with sufficient opportunities of witnessing or knowing their surprising sagacity, and that they merit to rank high amongst the brute creation. But, if you wish to know the pretensions and natures of animals, you must read Natural History. Of the dog, I will, to amuse Roger who is so fond of dogs, relate two or three anecdotes, for the truth of which I can vouch ; but, for the present, to give you a proof of what kind of entertainment you are to expect from such reading, you shall hear the history of the squirrel.

ANNA.

You surprise me, aunt : what can a squirrel do, I wonder; for mine does nothing but crack nuts and run round and round the roll in his cage all day ; but I love him dearly, because he seems so lively and happy.

Mrs. Eleanor drew from her pocket a small volume of Goldsmith's Natural History, from which she read as follows :—

THE NATURAL HISTORY OF THE SQUIRREL.

THE squirrel is never found in open fields, nor yet in copses, (woods of low-trees :) it always keeps in the midst of the tallest trees, and, as much as possible, shuns the habitation of man. It is very watchful ; if the tree in which it lives be but touched at the bottom, the squirrel instantly takes the alarm, quits its nest, and flies off to another, and thus travels along the tops of the forest until it finds itself perfectly out of danger. In this manner it continues, for some hours, at a distance from home, until the alarm be passed away ; and then it returns by paths that, to all quadrupeds but itself, are impassible.

Its usual way of moving is by bounds ; these it takes from one tree to another at forty feet distance ; and if, at any time, it is obliged to descend, it runs up the side of the next tree with amazing facility. In Lapland, and the extensive forests of the North, squirrels are observed to change their habitations, and to remove, in vast numbers, from one country to another. In these migrations they are generally seen by thousands, travelling directly forward, while neither rocks, forests, nor even the broadest waters, can stop their progress. When these little squirrels in their progress meet with broad rivers or lakes, they take a surprising method of crossing them : upon approaching the banks, and perceiving the breadth of the water, they all return, as if by common consent, into the neighbouring forest, each in quest of a piece of bark, which answers all the purposes of boats for wafting them over : when the whole company are fitted in this manner, they boldly commit their little fleet to the waves, every squirrel on its own piece of bark, and fanning the air with its tail to drive the vessel to its port. In this orderly manner they set forward,

and often cross lakes several miles broad. But it too often happens, that the poor mariners are not aware of the dangers of their navigation ; for, although at the edge of the water it is generally calm, in the midst it is always more turbulent : there, the least gust of wind oversets the little sailor and his vessel together ; and the whole squirrel navy, that a few minutes before rode proudly and securely along, is now overturned, and a shipwreck of two or three thousand follows. This, which is so unfortunate for the little animal, is generally the most lucky accident in the world for the Laplanders on the shore, who gather up the dead bodies thrown in by the waves, which he eats, and sells the skins for about a shilling a dozen.

MISS WINTER.

Thank you, aunt, this account is indeed very pretty ; but I should never have thought that a squirrel was so bold a creature.

MRS. PONTIN.

You can judge, Miss Winter, very little of the powers of animals by seeing them tame.

Would you, for instance, imagine that a sheep, the dull, stupid-looking animal which is now gazing so vacantly upon you, and which would scarcely stir until you should be near treading upon it, is yet, in its wild state, one of the liveliest and swiftest of creatures. Nothing, however, is more certain; and the mouflon, for so the wild sheep is called, compelled to seek its own food, and defend itself from the prowling beasts of the forest and of the plain, is watchful and fleet: but, when taken into the service of man, and abundance of food always placed before it, with a shepherd and faithful dog to guard it from all enemies, it has nothing to do but eat and gaze about it in indolent security, and then appears to have lost its natural character, and to have acquired one so opposite, that probably its own species, if it could be placed amongst them, would not know it for one of their family, and, if not, would certainly treat it as an enemy. But, as I before remarked, you must read Natural History, if you would learn the nature of animals.

ELLEN.

Indeed, madam, we shall like to read such

history better than the Popular Stories, or Arabian Tales, if it gives us such pretty accounts as that of the squirrel. The circumstance Mrs. Pontin observed of the probability that the wild sheep would not know the tame one to be of their species, reminds me of the tame jack-daw belonging to the gardener's son, which used to live with the poultry. Don't you remember, Louisa, how sorry you and I were when Roger's maid, Susan, told us that he was killed: poor fellow! he used to amuse us very much.

MRS. PONTIN.

How was he killed? Pray, Ellen, favour me with his history.

ELLEN.

I will most willingly tell it you as well as I can; but Jack's history is a very short one. I believe his life was happy, though his death was a cruel one. He came into our possession and died thus. You know, ma'am, at that side of the Abbey where the remains of the dove-house wall stands, there are a great many jackdaws; and papa is so fond of them, that he

never allows any of the village boys to disturb them, or take their nests. It happened one day, as Joe Spade, the gardener's son, was at play with some other boys under the old wall where the daws build, that a nestling fell down : it was immediately picked up by one of them, who sold it to Joe for a few halfpence. Joe took his purchase home, and bestowed much care and pains in feeding it ; for the poor bird was unable to feed itself. He kept it in the hen-house ; and, when it was able to pick up the corn, it fed with the poultry, and attached itself particularly to a fine old hen, and to the large black Spanish cock, so much admired by every-body. Jack might have escaped, had he pleased, for Joe would never clip his wings ; but he shewed no inclination to do so, and seemed as contented and happy as any of the little chickens. This bird would occasionally plume the old hen's feathers very softly, as if to court her favour, and sometimes attempted the same freedom with the cock ; but here Jack's attentions were not so well received, and the cock would give him an angry peck, which checked his presumption. At other times, Jack would get behind the chick-

ens, peck their legs, and then hop off; and, when he discovered a large party of them ready to resent the liberties he took, he never failed to seek protection from them, under the wing of the old hen, who never refused it to him. Jack's ambition seemed to be to cluck and crow as the cocks and hens did, and, by daily imitating their notes, he arrived at last to do both, though in an aukward manner. In short, Jack was a very diverting bird, though, it must be confessed, sometimes a mischievous one; for he would steal and hide such things as he could carry away, and then the servants were angry, and would wish him dead. On one occasion they were greatly provoked, because he carried off Nurse Caudle's silver scoop. Jack had lived in harmony amongst the poultry for three years, when he was one day observed upon the top of the coach-house, making a noise as a flight of the Abbey daws flew over him: after which he took two or three flights, apparently to make observation; but always returned to the poultry and his old station to roost. At length Jack flew boldly to the Abbey, as if tired of the poultry-yard, and wishing to join his own kind, and natural fa-

mily, the daws. There Joe Spade, who was his master, and had been his tender nurse, saw him pitch on the top of the old dove-house wall, to ask permission, as might be supposed, for admission amongst them; but he had the vexation to see a number of the wild jack-daws fly down upon him, and peck him with such fury, that they killed him on the spot. Poor Jack then tumbled down; and Joe, who had been watching him in great distress, picked him up, and brought him home, and buried him in the fir-grove behind the coach-house. And now, Mrs. Pontin, I would ask why those Abbey daws should have been so ill-natured as to have killed such a comical, good-natured fellow as poor Jack! It was certainly very cruel and unnatural of them.

MRS. PONTIN.

Not unnatural, Ellen, as their treatment of him arose from an instinctive policy common in animals; which directs them to reject from their community all strangers and members incompetent to provide for themselves. And now, Anna, were your pretty squirrel at liberty,

and should return to his native woods, he, in all probability, would experience a similar fate to that of the poor jackdaw ; for it appears to be in the order of nature, that at the time animals lose their liberty, they lose also the protection of their species in a wild state ; and when once become dependent on the care of man, must continue so throughout their lives.

Here all the children declared they would rather read histories of animals than those of fairies, giants, or genii, which were not true. The opinions and wishes of children are quickly communicated to each other ; and, if the eldest and favourite of a little group should happen to express a wish, the rest adopt it almost as certainly as a flock of birds follow instinctly the course of their leader through the air, lead where it may.

Mrs. Eleanor promised to indulge her nieces in the wishes they expressed, and then proposed to return home. The juvenile party accordingly rose ; and little Roger, intent all the way home on communicating to his maid Susan how cleverly squirrels like his sister Anna's could swim, begged his aunt to take him

again to walk with her, which she promised him he should, on the same conditions she required the preceding evening.

EVENING THE THIRD.

As Mrs. Eleanor, with her nieces, nephew, and Mrs. Pontin, were proceeding earlier than usual to take their accustomed walk, and had reached the park-gate, they were accosted by a negro, shabbily habited like a sailor, and without shoes: he appeared dejected and perplexed; and, while the tears rolled down his face, he humbly asked for some bread, and to be directed in the road to Farborn; saying he wanted one Mrs. Partho, who lived there.

The children were all ready to bestow their alms, and applied to Mrs. Pontin, who was their banker, for some pocket-money to give the black man; which he received with gratitude, the sole return Sir Edwin's children desired when they relieved the beggar. In truth, the children, under their aunt Eleanor's tuition, strengthened by constant observation of her consistent conduct, had already made such progress in genuine benevolence, that the "luxury of doing good" afforded them more

pleasure than the purchase of trinkets or sweetmeats, the common articles in which too great a proportion of the loose money allowed children is usually spent; but these were never regretted, when occasions like the present deprived them of those funds which alone might procure them; and Mrs. Eleanor Winter, being entirely of the opinion of a celebrated female moralist,* “That charity and self-denial were two principles which should never be separated,” did not replenish her nieces’ purses as a reward for their liberalities; considering this would be acting in opposition to this just opinion. Giving alms, without true Christian principles direct them, is too often either a mere tribute of selfishness, or an indiscriminate scattering of bounty, which too often misses the real objects of want and compassion.

Mrs. Eleanor’s charity sprung from the only legitimate source—Christian principles, which were deeply fixed in her heart; it was, therefore, of the purest kind, and never allowed her to be satisfied with such relief to the mendicant

* Mrs. Hannah Moore.

as the first impulse of humanity prompted, where any circumstance of words or manner indicated more distress than was declared. On these occasions, it was Mrs. Eleanor's practice to investigate his tale ; and, when it corresponded with truth, she invariably exerted herself to render him permanent service ; and many a poor creature, a vagrant wanderer from misfortune, or unavoidable necessity, she had been instrumental in restoring to the comforts of fixed life : nay, even some of the humblest tenants of the cottages on the castle lands of Sir Edwin Winter, owed their settlement entirely to the discernment, kindness, and influence of Mrs. Eleanor Winter. She now thought the negro, through his broken, though very intelligible, English, discovered a mildness and civility of manner beyond that the school taught, from which his dress declared him to come ; in consequence of which she desired him to follow her, and ordered the children to continue their walk, for that she would overtake them.

Roger only accompanied his aunt : at first sight of the black, he had crept close to her side, for nurse Caudle had scared him with threats

of the black man on a few occasions, when the peevishness of old age had betrayed her into an indiscretion which she was prompt to reprobate in others,—that of raising a bugbear for present use. Mrs. Eleanor remarked his fear, and told him to look at the negro's tears. Roger took courage to do so, and, as his heart melted to compassion, the alarm, which the colour of the poor man first inspired, became dissipated.

They reached the house by another path, and entered the avenue of fine old elms, on the tops of which was a rookery undisturbed since its first settlement. The rooks were cawing loudly, as if to warn or to welcome the group passing beneath their upper world.

Mrs. Eleanor had no sooner reached the servants' hall, which opened into this rookery, than she summoned the butler, and consigned the weary, hungry, and barefooted negro to his care, to be rested and refreshed, until she returned from walking. She then proposed to hear him further, and judge what more was proper to be done for him.

As Mrs. Eleanor and Roger were returning to their party, the latter observed a little bird fly and pitch in the path-way, within half-a-

dozen yards of them : Mrs. Eleanor perceived that it was encumbered by something ; so, hushing Roger, and bidding him stand still, she advanced towards the little creature, which made no effort to escape, and gently stooping down, took it up in her hand ; she then called Roger, and asked him if he knew what bird it was called. Roger instantly recognised a morning prisoner, and exclaimed, “ Oh ! aunt, that is my swallow, I know it by the ruff round its neck.” The poor bird had its head through a circle of stiff brown paper, larger than a crown piece, which confined it like a pillory, and so embarrassed it, that it flew with difficulty. “ One would imagine,” said Mrs. Eleanor, “ that the bird knew me, for you saw, Roger, by its looking up to me, it asked me, as plainly as it could, to set it free ; and that I shall immediately do.” She then drew out her scissars, and cut the paper pillory, which she gave to Roger ; and, at the same time, desiring him to observe how his bird, as he had called it, would enjoy being restored to liberty. She next placed it on the ground from whence she had taken it, and the happy creature immediately flew off : at first, indeed, it

appeared cramped ; but, as it mounted into the air, it regained strength with the full use of its pinions, and was soon out of sight.

Roger did not appear to sympathize with the liberated swallow ; on the contrary, he looked disappointed, and expressed regret for its departure with strong symptoms of weeping. “ And pray, Roger,” said Mrs. Eleanor, “ as you own the bird I have restored to liberty, can you tell me how it came to have that brown paper round its neck.” “ Aunt,” replied Roger, “ that very swallow came into my nursery this morning, and I caught it, and amused myself all the morning in playing with it ; and then Mrs. Caudle said I should kill it, unless I let it fly away ; so, as I did not want to kill it, I put it out of the window, after I had cut a bit of paper like the ruff Susan wears on Sundays, with a hole in it to push its head through, that I might know my bird if I should see it again ; and I am sure, aunt, I knew the bird, and I think he knew me, or why did it stop just before me.” “ Indeed, Roger,” replied Mrs. Eleanor, “ self-love deceives you ; suppose any person was to catch you, then confine and tease you for some time, and afterwards

send you away with your legs chained together ; how would you like it ?"—“ Not at all, aunt.”—“ Well,” continued Mrs. Eleanor, “ you have been exactly such a tormentor to the poor swallow, that was unwillingly a visitor in your nursery this morning ; and, had no friendly hand relieved the bird, he would probably have shortly been starved to death ; for, loaded about the neck with your paper pillory, he was embarrassed in his flight, and could not, therefore, fly swift enough to catch flies, his usual food, in sufficient quantity to support himself ; and with too little nourishment he would certainly have slowly perished with hunger.” Conviction of the truth of Mrs. Eleanor’s reasoning, now struck the mind of Roger ; he became sensible of his error, and promised his aunt that he would, in future, give liberty to all the birds, moths, and butterflies, that should visit his nursery. Both, then, quickened their pace, and silently mused on the subject which had engaged them : Roger digested, with infantine simplicity, the practical lesson he had received on humanity from his aunt ; while she was engaged in deeper reflection on

the incident which occasioned it, and which she could not refrain from considering a confirmation of the Scripture declaration, that “not a sparrow falleth to the ground, without the knowledge of our Heavenly Father.” Providence seemed to have furnished the little bird with a new and temporary instinct for the purpose of its deliverance. The subject served to raise the speculations of the pious Mrs. Eleanor, and to fill her mind with fresh impressions that God’s eye is over all his works; and her heart, warmly disposed to co-operate with the grateful truth, felt earnest to obey the calls of humanity.

They soon overtook the little girls, who were anxious to hear something of the negro; Mrs. Eleanor told them that they must suppress their curiosity until their return home, upon which they continued their walk together. Roger, in high good humour with every thing, detailed, to his sisters, the little incident which had engaged him; and felt that glow of satisfaction which invariably arises in the most youthful bosom when open to the conviction of truth, and accompanied by an immediate recti-

fication of principle, and a conquest over selfishness.

Arrived at the oak, Roger reminded his aunt of her promise to relate to him more about animals, and begged she would tell him stories of dogs, because he liked all dogs in the world except Lion.

ANNA.

Let me join Roger's request, aunt, though he has not forgiven Lion : indeed, Roger, you must not be angry with him, for, though he is rough and surly, he is very faithful and honest, you know.

MRS. ELEANOR.

I have many anecdotes of dogs ; some I have heard, some read, and others known : which now do you prefer I should relate to you ?

LOUISA.

Oh ! aunt ; I think I can answer for all, that we shall prefer to hear such anecdotes as you know, for then we shall be certain of their truth.

MRS. ELEANOR.

I will then gratify you as you wish, and begin with Colonel Morgan's American spaniel. This dog accompanied his master on a visit to us, but would never take the least notice of me whilst the colonel continued in the house; when, however, he quitted it, which he had occasion to do for a fortnight, on account of some business to transact in London, Dash was left behind, and then thought proper to make his court to me. He accordingly used constantly to sleep at my bed-room door, from which he never stirred until I opened it in the morning: when he perceived that I had done so, he testified his joy, and followed me down to the breakfast-table, under which he would lie quietly until the cloth was removed, and would then take his station in the hall or garden, for the chief part of the day. In the evening again he kept near, and attended me to my bed-room door, where he continued like a vigilant centinel. Thus I appeared to have gained his friendship; the case, however, was otherwise, for, when his master returned, Dash's attentions ceased; he entirely forsook me, and would scarcely condescend to

notice my caresses. This was certainly the Political Dog.

My second anecdote is this.—A lady, with whom I am acquainted, had two dogs—Perdue and Vixen, the one a spaniel, the other a terrier. These dogs were great favorites, and generally in the lady's sitting-room. Sometimes it happened that they were ordered out of it, and the humour shewn on this occasion was whimsical. If Perdue was first ordered to quit the room, she rose reluctantly, but always went and seized hold of the ear of her companion, Vixen, and so forced her out also; and, if Vixen had the command given her first, she never failed to perform the same ceremony on Perdue;—when together, they contentedly sought another place of repose. It so happened that these favorites had puppies at the same time, all of which, except one, were drowned. About this single puppy the mothers were, for the space of a week, perpetually quarrelling; after which they were observed to agree perfectly well. On watching them, it was discovered that one mother nursed the puppy during the day, and then resigned her place to the other, who nursed it through

the night : so that these animals must be called the Equitable Dogs.

The last anecdote I can now give you is as follows:—A lady, who lived in the East Indies, possessed a remarkably fine Newfoundland dog, which attended her every where she went. Being on a visit to her sister up the country, she became perplexed by the disquietude shewn by her favorite, Rover; for, as she and her sister were chatting and enjoying each other's society in the cool of the evening, they were frequently interrupted by Rover, who ran to and fro, and would then rest and bark at the door of the bed-chamber, in which his mistress slept; this he continued to do at intervals during the whole of the evening. When the hour of rest arrived, and the sisters were about to separate for the night, Rover, as his mistress approached her bed-room, became almost frantic, and pulled her violently by the gown. This completely roused and fixed the attention of the other sister, who declared that her guest should at least for that night occupy some other apartment. The servants were then called and ordered to examine the room, which they had done carelessly before in the

early part of the evening, when the occasion of his disquietude was discovered to be an object truly alarming: a very large Cobra de Capello, or hooded snake, by the side of a wardrobe in the bed-chamber, erecting its terrific head, and ready to attack and bite the first creature that came in its way. The snake was killed, and thus the lady, through the sagacity of her dog, was delivered from imminent danger; for the bite of this snake is certain death, unless an antidote be immediately applied. This dog, I think, must be called the Sagacious Dog.

Thus you perceive that dogs really possess several of those qualities which we see in our fellow-creatures; nay, so discerning are these animals, that they are observed to take a strong cast from the state even of their masters; and it is related by a writer of unquestionable authority,* that the dog of a negro in the West Indies betrays, at first sight, that such is his condition; for he loses his playful propensities, seems to feel the inferiority of his station, and actually crouches before such of his own spe-

* Mr. Brian Edwards.

cies as are used to better company. In short, a volume might be written similar to those I have related of dogs; and their fidelity has been the theme of the poet's song. I think, as our little girls like poetry, Mrs. Pontin, they would be pleased with Pope's description of Ulysses' dog; which, at a convenient opportunity, I beg the favour of you to point out to them.

MRS. PONTIN.

I shall have a pleasure in doing so. But you must allow me to ask you, while the matter occurs to me, whether any certain antidote has been found for the bite of snakes?

MRS. ELEANOR.

I have read that there certainly has, and that the caustic alkali, or the *eau de luce*, which contains a sufficient quantity of it in its composition, rubbed to the wounded part, and given in suitable doses with water, will counteract the effects of the poison infused by the snake, provided it be timely administered, and while the patient retains the power of swallowing; and will, in a short time, remove all the ill effects of the bite. This is one of those valua-

ble discoveries, which characterise our times as the period, when, as the Scripture expresseth it, “knowledge increaseth.”

ELLEN.

I read in some little book, Mrs. Pontin, that in England snakes of all kinds are harmless.

MRS. ELEANOR.

I have heard so too, Ellen, but am not inclined to consider it as generally true, since some, at least, of the species, will certainly wound dangerously, and even fatally. A case to put this point beyond dispute, occurred in our own neighbourhood only three summers ago, which happened to be an uncommonly hot one. A man, employed in the woods to catch vipers, was bitten by one. The common application of the oil of the viper, with which he was plentifully supplied, was applied without effect; and, apparently in the agonies of death, he was carried to a sensible medical man, who was most fortunately within reach of him; and who, theoretically acquainted with the effects of the alkali, judged this case one on which he could prove its use practically.

He applied it according to the Asiatic prescription, and perfectly restored the man. I would not, therefore, have you, Roger, imitate the example of your cousin Frank Spicer, since you have heard the serious mischief, that one reptile, at least, of the snake kind, can do in England.

MISS WINTER.

Have you forgotten, sisters, how Frank frightened us all last summer, when he came marching round the sweep, followed by half-a-dozen farmers' sons, holding a large viper on the end of a stick, which he had contrived to thrust through its head; and, at the same time singing, "here I come, the conqueror." At the sound of Frank's voice, my papa looked out at his dressing-room window, and there saw him in the front of his little troop of volunteers, who were all in high admiration of his courage, while he held up the stick and viper as a banner above his head.

ELLEN.

Oh! yes; I shall not forget it: and how papa

sent some of the servants to kill the viper, which still hangs against the barn-door, amongst a number of other wicked animals; hawks, and kites, and pole-cats, besides.

MISS WINTER.

Pray, aunt; how can we tell the harmless snakes from those whose bite may kill one?

MRS. ELEANOR.

The naturalist, my dear, informs us, that our first attention should be directed to the teeth of these reptiles; if they have two large teeth, or fangs, issuing from the upper jaw, they are to be set down as venomous; but, if they are without these, we may consider them as inoffensive.

ROGER.

Oh! I understand that, aunt, quite well; and I will always go close to a snake and see whether it has those fangs; and, if I spy them, I will run away as fast as I can, and call somebody to kill it; but, if it has no fangs, then I may take it up in my hand,—may I not?

MRS. ELEANOR.

Indeed you must do no such thing, Roger ; for the snake might wound you before you could find out whether it had the power to injure you or not ; and as yet, you are too young to venture so near danger : and, another thing, Roger ; while we are talking of terrible reptiles, I must give you a caution against handling any kind of reptiles, since some of those, generally considered harmless, are certainly not in all cases so ; of the truth of which, I will convince you.

A few summer's ago, I paid a morning visit to Lady Clerbon, whom I found in much alarm and perplexity, on account of her only little boy, who was ill in bed, and in a high fever. She begged me, as I was much accustomed to children, and she presumed also to their diseases, to accompany her into the child's room ; who, the preceding morning, at the time of my visit, was in perfect health and spirits. She then informed me that George, who was seven years old, had been running about the garden, when, attracted by the beautiful colours of a very large caterpillar, vulgarly called the Devil's golden ring, which has numerous legs, and appears covered with long hairs, he had

foolishly taken it up in his hands, and allowed it to crawl over his neck and face; and, in a short time, he came in an alarming spectacle indeed. The movements of the reptile were traced by a shining slime left on the child; and his hands, fingers, face, neck, throat, eyes, and head, were as red as blood, and so swollen, that his fine eyes seemed quite buried in his head: he complained of head-ache, and stiffness wherever the redness appeared, which was where the reptile had touched him, attended with sickness; and Lady Clerbon added, that what had most alarmed her was, that he also complained of great difficulty in swallowing. She sent immediately for the doctor, who had given him medicine, and fomented him; but that he was still, though better, too ill to get up. I saw him in the state I described; nor was he able to quit his bed for some days after my visit.

ELLEN.

The creature, aunt, must certainly have poisoned master Clerbon, and I cannot help wishing there were neither poisonous creatures nor poisonous plants in the world.

MRS. PONTIN.

You do not know what you wish, Ellen; since poisons are in medicine, at least, of most important service; and have, doubtless, far greater uses in the creation, although we may never discover what these may be.

LOUISA.

Then, ma'am, we will consent that they shall remain, and only wish them all confined to one spot in the world, and that that spot should be to the Island of Java, where that king of all poisons is to be found—the baneful and dreadful Upas tree.

MRS. PONTIN.

Your poisons and poisonous plants, Ellen, you may confine where you please; but they cannot be associated with the *Upas tree*, since no such tree exists as that is described to be.

ELLEN.

Now, Mrs. Pontin, that really is very odd; for I am quite certain I read—and I will shew you that I did—the whole account of the Upas

tree, in those delightful little books called "Mental Improvement;" in which I thought every thing related must be true. But, may I ask, how can you know, ma'am, that the account of the Upas tree is otherwise than true?

MRS. PONTIN.

From indisputable authority, and that of a late traveller, who, as well as myself, I suppose, had been amused with the account given of this extraordinary tree, though unable to conceive the possibility of a "single tree, the sole individual of its species." If you will remind me, Ellen, I will point out to you, on our return home, the chapter in Barrow, in which this error of the Upas tree in Java is clearly explained.

LOUISA.

Should not travellers take care not to relate for truths, what really are not so?

MRS. PONTIN.

Undoubtedly they should; but they themselves are sometimes imposed upon, and, at other times, matter which they do not always credit as fact, they relate to amuse, but not to mislead, their

readers. In this way I should be inclined to think the fable of the Upas tree became popular.

MRS. ELEANOR.

I perceive, my children, it is beginning to rain a little ; and therefore it will be prudent to hasten home.

The party arose, and walked home at a brisk pace ; each mind as much amused with floating ideas on the subjects which had engaged them, as that of the profoundest zoographer. When they arrived at the gate where they had met the black man, a solicitude for him took place of all others in the bosom of each : they expressed this to their aunt, who, sympathising with them, and ever ready to gratify every virtuous feeling, invited them all to drink tea with her and their papa. Arrived at the house, the children quickly changed their frocks, which were wet with a mizzling rain ; and Miss Winter, having obtained Mrs. Pontin's permission to go to the library for Barrow's Voyage to Cochin-China, procured it, and then accompanied her sisters and Mrs. Pontin to join her indulgent aunt in the drawing-room.

MISS WINTER.

I have taken the liberty, my dear aunt, of bringing Barrow, as you kindly promised to point out the part in it which contradicts, or explains, the account of the Upas tree.

MRS. ELEANOR.

I have marked on a slip of paper the chapter and page, from which you may read what Mr. Barrow has said.

“ After the notoriety which the baneful Upas tree has obtained from the republication of a popular work of a most extraordinary tree that first appeared several years ago in the Gentleman’s Magazine, it would have been an unpardonable neglect in us not to make very particular inquiry into the degree of credibility which is attached by the inhabitants of the island to its existence ; and, if such tree did exist, to endeavour to learn how far its deleterious qualities might correspond with those which had been ascribed to it. Accordingly, we seldom entered a garden or plantation without interrogating the people employed in them as to the Upas. The result of our inquiries was little favourable to the

truth of Foersch's relation, which carries with it, indeed, internal marks of absurdity. Yet the relation was not wholly discredited. 'That which is strange,' says Dr. Johnson, 'is delightful, and a pleasing error is not willingly detected.' The magic pen of Dr. Darwin, by celebrating the wonders of this wonderful tree, made the error still more pleasing; and consecrated, as it were, the fiction of the Upas."

As fabulous stories have sometimes, however, their origin in truth, so that of the Upas may probably not be wholly groundless, but admit some explanation. In tropical climates, plants possessing noxious qualities are very common. Java is considered to abound with them. The first of this kind which was discovered, might probably have the name of Upas conferred on it; which name, being afterwards adjunctively applied to all other plants possessing the same qualities, became the appellative for every poisonous tree. That this was the common acceptance of the word upas, I inferred from its being connected with the trivial name of all such plants as were either known or supposed to contain poisonous qualities. Thus, for instance, the *Dioscorea dele-*

teria was called the Ubi upas, which may be translated, the poisonous potato. The seed of a tree bearing a papilionaceous flower, and apparently a species of sophora, was called the Upas bidjie. The poisonous seed, and several other plants, of real or supposed noxious qualities, had all of them the word Upas joined to their proper names. In this sense, the Bohun or Boon upas of Foersch would imply *neither more nor less than a poisonous tree, and not any particular species of tree, much less an unconnected individual, bearing the name of Upas.*

MRS. ELEANOR.

Having now gratified your curiosity, and satisfied yourself that the Upas tree is not to be considered as the eighth wonder of the world, we must suspend further questions or remarks on the fabulous, and consider the case of the poor negro. Mrs. Eleanor then sent for him, and desired him to tell them his distress, which he readily did.

“ My name is Yamoussa ; my sister’s name Afibi. We come to England with good lady Miss Belmour from Jamaica, sixteen months ago. Miss Belmour very sick in England, and

doctor tell she die. Miss Belmour spend all money; and massa no send any more; so massa's agent tell Miss Belmour come live at his house; and send servants away. Miss Belmour very good lady; she like Afibi and Yamoussa, and she very much sorry send them away. But she no money get, and no live long, so she send Afibi to one Mrs. Partho at Fairburn, and I go serve one Captain Dixon; he very sick and die; so then Miss Belmour bid me go see Afibi, and tell servant go put me in great waggon, come in three days to Fairburn, and she give me four dollars, and tell me be good. I come two days in waggon; and last night, while I sleep, somebody come take my monies, my clothes, my shoes, and left me these things; so I no dress like Yamoussa, but look like one beggar."—Here the negro wept, but consolation was present. "Do not cry," said the humane Mrs. Eleanor, "I will take care of you, and endeavour to get you some account of Afibi. I know Mrs. Partho, who lives at Fairburn, which is only three miles from hence, very well. Mrs. Eleanor next desired the butler to provide Yamoussa some clean clothes and a bed, until she could decide

in what manner it would be proper to dispose of him, and what she could be able to do after having paid a visit of inquiry to Mrs. Partho; and this she declared her attention to do the following morning. Here Mrs. Eleanor dismissed the negro, after receiving his repeated thanks, and resigning him to the care of the butler, who, a veteran in the service of Sir Edwin Winter's family, was long accustomed to such humble and casual guests; and, while preparing for their suitable accommodation, had learnt to feel for their happiness, and was, consequently, the willing agent of Mrs. Eleanor's acts of charity.

The children's feelings were in unison with those of their aunt; though Miss Winter recollected at this moment some transient discussions on the merits of blacks, which, for the first time, being desirous to understand, she thus addressed her aunt.

MISS WINTER.

Pray, aunt, is not that poor Yamoussa one of those blacks, said, by our cousins Spicer, to be fit only for slaves, because they neither look nor feel as we do?

MRS. ELEANOR.

Most certainly one of those same blacks; but I would not have you, Emma, imbibe any of your cousins' feelings on this particular subject, since God has made no essential difference in the faculties of the minds of men; and, it is to the circumstances of climate, food, employment, and knowledge, that there exists, to common observers, so great an apparent difference in them. This truth, Emma, provided they possess sound moral principles, well educated people, who observe and reflect, admit; whereas ignorant people are apt to credit only as much as they see, and conclude that inferiority, between a black and white man, or between a slave and free man, real, which there is every reason to believe is entirely accidental?

ELLEN.

But then I cannot imagine why a negro should have a black skin, and wool in place of hair on his head; do you know why this is, aunt?

MRS. ELEANOR.

That is a question, Anna, upon which much wiser heads than mine are yet to decide. It is

however, with great reason, thought that constant exposure to the extremes of heat, cold, and wet, may materially affect the tint of the skin. Your uncle Spicer, for instance, is extremely dark, and his complexion full as tawny as that of the gipsy who proposed to tell our fortune the other day; yet I have heard your grandpapa speak of Mr. Spicer as a fair and flaxen headed boy when he went to the West Indies. You must not, however, Anna, as I have occasionally told you, expect at any time to comprehend all the causes of visible effects, for this the wisest creature will never be able to do. The sable hue of the negro strikes you with particular force, because it is so strong a contrast to the fair complexions you have been accustomed to see; but, could you be in the habit of viewing the many intermediate tints of skin between the very black and very fair which exist in different parts of the world, you would probably more easily credit, that the variety arises from those local circumstances I particularised,—that is, excessive heat, cold, and wet, through operating in ways far beyond the power of common curiosity to find out, or eyen of philosophy to trace.

MRS. PONTIN.

Colour alone, however, Anna, has clearly nothing to do with the mind, though the other circumstances may with the complexion. You, for example, are very fair, have blue eyes, and auburn hair; while Ellen has a brown complexion, with dark hair and hazle eyes: yet Ellen, though her talents are somewhat different from yours, learns as well, because she has equal advantages of education and care with you, Anna.

ANNA.

Indeed, ma'am, I think that what you and my aunt say must be true, and my cousins ought not to speak so ill-naturedly of blacks.

At this point of conversation a carriage drew up, and presently after Mr. Spicer's family were announced. Mr. and Mrs. Spicer were a pair who possessed the worst prejudices of the West Indians, with a great share of that shew of liberality with which the world in general is much disposed to be satisfied; and which consisted in a profuse spending of money on objects of immediate gratification to their vanity or sensuality. On the slave-trade, that

subject which interested the truly liberal, Mr. and Mrs. Spicer would not bestow a patient hearing, for selfishness had so engaged their feelings, that these would give no chance to their judgment to shew any opposition to them. Mr. Spicer, who was in parliament, had with inflexible violence opposed every motion made for the abolition of that abominable traffic, heretofore, and too long, the disgrace of a Christian nation; and now that humanity had triumphed over a cruel and partial policy, and abolished the slave-trade, he was perpetually abusing negroes, and railing at legislators, their successful advocates. No year of Jubilee, therefore, marked the happy epoch of African freedom to Mr. Spicer's slaves; for Mr. Spicer's soul had no sympathy with that of a Wilberforce or a Howard; and, it may be declared without an injustice on his character, that he would more willingly have bestowed a thousand pounds on the fleeting brilliancy of splendid fire-works for one gala-evening, than have subscribed a solitary guinea either to commemorate the freedom of the negro, or to have ameliorated his state in continued slavery. Hence the prejudices of the Misses Gertrude

and Julia Spicer, which had not escaped the observation of their cousin Winter.

Mrs. Spicer thus abruptly addressed her sister, Mrs. Eleanor Winter:—"Sister, we are going to Stowell races, and as our girls you know are rather too young to bring out, they must not be seen there, for I am told all the world will be on the course. I have, therefore, brought them to you, and will pick them up on our return home." Mrs. Eleanor received her nieces with her usual complacency, but their averted looks and reluctant acknowledgment of their aunt's kind reception of them, plainly indicated the chagrin they felt at being left at the castle with her. Educated in the worst style of fashion, these young ladies panted for the moment when all the restraints of childhood would cease by rule, and their introduction into company follow as a matter of course. The Roman boy never more anxiously wished to throw off the puerile for the manly gown, than belles of a certain class of society, and standard of morals, do for that period, when the frock and the lesson may be laid aside, and the robe of dissipation assumed. The Misses Spicer had yet to wait some time for this de-

lightful epoch, and had they been disposed to have employed the interval in useful acquirements, they would have rejoiced in every occasion to sojourn at the castle with their aunt Eleanor, who possessed both the inclination and the ability to improve them; but the contrary being the fact, the Misses Spicer were unlikely to do more than pass the remaining periods of their retirement in restless impatience for its termination.

Mrs. Spicer observed that they must proceed, as it grew late, and their beds were ordered at Stowel. She then hastily addressed a few words *en passant* to the little Winters, and, wishing all good night, told her daughters, by way of consoling them for their present mortification, that their season of enjoyment would soon arrive, and that the next Stowel races they might depend on being the most fashionably dressed girls on the course, and in the ball-room. She then skipped down to her carriage, followed in silence by Mr. Spicer, who had been a passive hearer of her animating harangue to his daughters.

MISS SPICER.

As we came in at the door, aunt, we saw a black at the bottom of the gallery with the butler. I suppose you have a plantation at the castle.

MRS. ELEANOR.

No, Gertrude; I have no plantation, nor do I desire to possess one. The black you saw, we met in our walk this afternoon as a beggar, and by enquiry have learnt his story, which has interested our feelings.

MISS SPICER.

Interested your feelings! Bless me, aunt, how is it possible for a black to do that!

MRS. ELEANOR.

Indeed, Gertrude, I know no reason why he should not; but as I can account for your prejudices against the poor blacks, I am not inclined to censure it hardly: however, my dear, as your opinions of that undervalued race will soon be considered to shew a deficiency of knowledge, as well as of humanity, I could

wish you to suppress them until thus rectified by time; in the course of which I hope you will be convinced of a truth, which is progressively making its way, and will, I trust, be generally acknowledged,—that black people are naturally as good as white people.

MISS SPICER.

Good as white people! No, aunt, that I shall never believe; for I have always heard my papa say, (and he is reckoned a very sensible man,) that blacks are fit for nothing but slaves, and would not work at all, if they were not whipped; though papa feeds his slaves better than any planter on the island: for he says, “it does not signify how hard they labour provided they have plenty given them to eat; but notwithstanding that, they are shockingly lazy and good for nothing.

MRS. ELEANOR.

You greatly err, Gertrude: the oppressed negro has feelings, as just and kind as we have; and whenever the time shall arrive that he becomes converted to Christianity, I am not sure that he will not shame many who

have long been so. I will tell you a short story:—"During the revolt of the Maroons in the island of Jamaica, in the year 1795, was an officer of the militia who escaped from a destructive ambush of the Maroons, in which many brave men fell. He owed his life to the attachment of a negro servant, and probably a slave, that attended him; and who, during the first attack of the enemy, perceived a Maroon from behind a tree present his gun at his beloved master; he instantly rushed forward to protect him, by interposing his own person, and actually received the shot in his breast. The wound did not prove mortal, and the poor fellow was rewarded as he merited, for his heroic fidelity!" Suppose, Gertrude; this officer had been your father; should you think his deliverer deserved to be a slave?

MISS SPICER.

Oh! aunt; he might be a slave, but then I should have rewarded him handsomely, for I detest shabbiness, and that you know would have been very generous.

MRS. ELEANOR.

Nothing short of the jewel above all price—liberty, Gertrude, would have been even just

to the deliverer of your father ; and this idea ought to have been the foundation for pecuniary generosity. But, when you have acquired a taste for reading, you will learn the history of the blacks of Africa, as well as that of the fair Europeans.

MISS SPICER.

No, indeed, ma'am ; I am sure papa would think it time thrown away to study the history of blacks, for we know quite enough about them in Jamaica ; and I advise you, aunt, to watch the beggar in your house, or the butler may happen to find his plate deficient ; for blacks are horridly wicked, and dreadful thieves, I assure you. And now I think of it, I have heard papa and other gentlemen talk a great deal about those very Maroons, who are the vilest wretches in the whole world ; but thank goodness we are rid of them in Jamaica, except a few, I believe, who are on their good behaviour. I think they should all have been killed, whereas they have only been sent away to some other country to murder, rob, and ill treat other people.

MRS. ELEANOR.

The Maroons I admit, Gertrude, were a merciless set of miscreants; but did you know their history, you would not be surprised that they were so. I hope, however, that such a mortification as the detection of falsehood and dishonesty in the garb of such apparent humility and simplicity as that our beggar wears, is not reserved for us; and I shall, therefore, leave our butler to take care of his plate, and the weary negro to repose, without caution to the one, or suspicion of the other.

MISS WINTER.

As I delight in knowing all I can, and particularly as you rather seem to excuse them, may I ask, dear aunt, who these Maroons were?

MRS. ELEANOR.

The Maroons, my dear Emma, were, according to Mr. Brian Edwards, who has written a very amusing and instructive history of the West Indies, slaves belonging to the Spaniards, when the latter surrendered the Island of Jamaica to the English, and who then retreated to

the mountains in order to recover their freedom. There they meditated revenge for the injuries that they and their ancestors had suffered in being torn from their native country and reduced to slavery in a foreign one: they hoped to gratify this passion on the new conquerors; at the same time to become sole proprietors of the soil that they had long been compelled to cultivate for others, and thus to make amends for their forced emigration. All this was very natural; and their cruelty is to be attributed to irritated minds, to the state of slavery to which they were reduced, and to their barbarous ignorance as unlettered Pagans.

They were at length subdued, and the government of Jamaica, with some exceptions, banished them to Nova Scotia in North America, where, as a few strangers in a wide country, they could do no harm but at the risk of their lives.—They promise, however, to become useful and contented citizens, as their industry will be rewarded with individual independance, and their manners and customs will resemble other Christian nations; for they are instructed in Christianity, and embrace it fast, while their children are taught the acquire-

ments of reading and writing, advantages which are peculiar to civilised society, and are necessary as the means to gain knowledge in all the arts and sciences of life.

MISS WINTER.

This is a pleasing account ; but why are they called Maroons,—I recollect no such name in the geographical division of Africa ?

MRS. ELEANOR.

Maroons, my dear, amongst the Spanish Americans, signify hog-hunters, the woods abounding with wild hogs, and the pursuit of them forming the chief employment of fugitive negroes. Marrano, in Spanish, is the word for a young pig.

Tea, at all times the final refreshment offered in Sir Edwin Winter's house, was now brought in ; after which the younger part of the family retired, the little Winters being fully impressed with just ideas of the violence done the natural rights of the blacks, and, in proportion as they were so, interested for Yamoussa, the object on whom their attention was fixed as the representative of his species; and the Misses Spicer feeling

much contempt for what they graciously termed their aunt Eleanor's old maidish way of thinking about blacks, and, it must be confessed, with their spirits in a most unchristian frame, and little disposed to make a part of the congregation at evening prayers, but from which they knew they must not presume to absent themselves. At nine o'clock, all the family met at the sound of the bell, in an apartment sufficiently commodious, called Mrs. Eleanor's dressing-room, which was over the chamber appropriated to the use of the housekeeper, and conveniently situated for the servants easily to collect and reach by a private staircase; and this hour was fixed upon that the elder children in the school-room, as well as the servants from the hall, might be present and reminded of their duties before their attention was weary, and a desire to sleep was the only remaining wish with either. Sir Edwin always joined his family, morning and evening, to officiate as chaplain to it; and no description of company or employment of any kind, was ever allowed to interfere with the performance of this serious duty, which he had been brought up regularly

to observe, and which his heart most fully approved.

The Misses Spicer thought the custom of family prayers an irksome piece of gothic dullness, which nobody, except their aunt Eleanor, would think of forcing young people, who were only visitors, to attend ; and that prayers at church, once a-week, were sufficient for the best Christians in the world.

As soon as Mrs. Eleanor Winter had breakfasted next morning, and given her usual directions, she sent for Yamoussa, and speaking kindly to him, she told him that she was going to Mrs. Partho, to find his sister Afibi. Then, desiring the butler to take care of him until her return, she ordered the carriage, and proceeded to Fairburn. On stopping at Mrs. Partho's gate, the first object that met her view was a well-looking negress walking in the garden with two little girls, and in the act of placing a row of daisies round the bonnet of one of them. As soon as she saw the carriage she modestly withdrew with the children out of observation, and thus, for the present, disappointed the inquiring eye of Mrs. Eleanor, who

was about to gratify her curiosity by asking whether she were not the Afibi she sought.

Mrs. Eleanor Winter found Mrs. Partho engaged in instructing seven or eight children; and, apologising for her interruption, and early visit, she, without further ceremony, explained the purport of it.

Mrs. Partho listened with feelings of sympathy to Mrs. Eleanor's account of the manner of her acquaintance with Yamoussa, and his subsequent tale, and then replied,—“I am happy, my dear madam, to tell you that Afibi is with me, and I hope comfortably settled in my family. The circumstance which brought her into it was simply this. Wanting a servant on whom I could depend, to take care of my three little girls, I took the usual methods of inquiry for such a one; but, happening to cast my eyes over the advertisements of our weekly paper, I observed amongst them one which engaged my attention.”—Here Mrs. Partho took from her writing-desk the advertisement that she had cut out of the newspaper, and which was as follows: “Wants a situation to attend a lady, or three or four children, a black woman, twenty years of age; she is sober, ho-

nest, and well-tempered ; can read, write, and sew plain work, and has lived six years with her present mistress, who regrets to part with her, but does so for reasons which will be satisfactorily explained to any lady desirous to engage her ; and whose character and situation may promise a permanent and comfortable service. Enquire, &c. &c.” “ Mr. Partho agreed with me that an attention to this advertisement might be the means of procuring an eligible servant ; and he accordingly made full inquiry agreeably to the directions given ; and the lady made similar ones respecting us. After being mutually satisfied, the black woman was sent here by the stage-coach, with a letter from her mistress, a Miss Belmour ; which I will also show you.” Mrs. Partho drew the letter from the same repository as before : it was short. and as follows:—“ Madam : with this letter I consign to your care my poor affectionate Afibi, who, I am confident, will prove a faithful servant to you ; and I persuade myself that you, madam, will be sensible of her worth. Unexpected pecuniary embarrassments have obliged me to part with her, at least for a time ; and the necessity of doing so has

caused me much distress. I am, however, now reconciled to the step I have taken; for, in thus disposing of her, I hope I have provided an asylum for a faithful creature, which she could not continue to enjoy with me; as I can have no hope of being long an inhabitant of this world, since my complaints have continued to increase every month that I have resided in England, and the faculty have ceased to flatter me with any hopes of recovery. When the event of my death takes place, my servants, for Afibi has a brother, of whom I have also disposed, would be either strangers at a loss what to do in this country, or would be returned to the West Indies, that they might be sent back to work in the plantation; and this, after five years' domestic service, and the acquirements which they have made, would be a severity under which I fear they would sink. Wishing you, madam, all that comfort in Afibi which I am obliged to resign, I remain, with cordial wishes for your mutual happiness, madam, your very humble servant,

JANE BELMOUR." }

“ This letter,” continued Mrs. Partho,

“ you will readily believe, created a warm interest for Afibi, who appeared, however, for some time dejected and reserved ; yet a readiness to oblige evinced a sense of her duty, and a wish to perform it. The sorrow which clouded her brow, I judged, arose from her new situation, and the peculiarly distressing circumstances which placed her in it, and which my heart readily admitted as a sufficient cause for a depressed state of mind. This humane treatment soon conquered her melancholy, and an easy confidence in me succeeded it. I have learnt from her, that besides the regret she felt at parting with Miss Belmour, much anxiety hung about her respecting Yamoussa, her brother, the affectionate partner of each vicissitude of her life, and of his destiny and welfare. Mr. Partho has had it in contemplation to make inquiry, and the assurance of this intention has tended to tranquillise her mind : the tidings, therefore, you bring will be most welcome and delightful to her.” Here Mrs. Partho sent for Afibi, and introduced her to Mrs. Eleanor Winter, who asked her if she should not be glad to see her brother Yamoussa ; to which she replied, “ Oh, yes, madam ! very much glad to see poor

Yamoussa, but he be great way off." Mrs. Eleanor then informed her where he was, and proposed to Mrs. Partho to take her home, and send her back in the evening, to which she readily consented. Afibi curtsied; and, by the direction of her mistress, withdrew to prepare herself to attend her new friend. "I shall leave you, my dear madam," said Mrs. Partho, "to hear Afibi's little tale from herself, to the sequel of which only I have confined my communications. Of Miss Belmour, who has proved that she merits the sentiments she expresses, she invariably speaks with gratitude and affection—but of the West Indies with much more than dislike."

Mrs. Eleanor felt gratified in the thought that Afibi was settled in so exemplary a family as she knew that of Mr. Partho's to be; a short sketch of which may not be unacceptable to such of my young readers as feel an interest in the destiny of Afibi.

Mr. Partho was the incumbent of a small living; and, finding the income it produced, in the mild and equitable way in which he commuted with his parishioners for the tythes of it, inadequate to supply the reasonable or neces-

sary wants of a large family, he took a limited number of pupils, at a liberal stipend of one hundred guineas each, which supplied a regular and certain income, that, with the help of his glebe, enabled him every year to save a sum equal to the produce of his church preferment, as a provision for his ten children. Mr. Partho had no wish to make a rapid fortune by the profit arising from his pupils, which he could easily have done, as from a well-established fame he might have increased them to any number he pleased. The generality of men would have done so; but the generality resembled not Mr. Partho. This gentleman was a minister of the gospel, and performed the duties of his sacred function as one anxious "to make his calling and election sure." He did not, therefore, shape the sublime doctrines of the Gospel to suit any secular object; nor would he have engaged in any pursuits, even for the advantage of his family, which would have interfered with, or obstructed, his due attention to these. Mr. Partho's chief object was to educate his numerous family under his own eye, and to be in a capacity to leave each individual of it a small sum to animate his exertion in that

line of life, in which it might be the will of Providence to place him: and the twelve pupils who enabled him to do this, he viewed as an addition to his flock, which it could well bear without any lessening of his proper attention to it. He reared them as Christians who should glory in the Cross of Christ; whilst he instructed them as gentlemen, and thus qualified them to become truly good citizens of the world.

Mr. Partho's worth was well known, his abilities for tuition acknowledged, and his method approved. He received his pupils from the nursery, and qualified them for the university. In the tuition of the youngest of these, Mrs. Partho was his sole auxiliary; and she taught them, with her own children, reading, writing, and the rudiments of grammar and figures. Mrs. Partho was a mild, pleasing woman, with inexhaustible patience, and a playfulness, accompanying a correctness of humour and manner, which attracted and attached her youthful charge, at the same time that it repressed all levity or insubordination in them: the children, in short, loved her; and mothers consigned their little sons to her tuition, without

a fear that they would miss maternal tenderness in quitting them.

Sir Edwin Winter and his sister Eleanor so justly appreciated the merits of this well-matched pair, that they intended to send Roger in a very short time to be instructed by them; for they considered Mr. Partho's plan of education to unite the advantages of both public and private; excluding equally that laxity of morals too commonly acquired in the former, and the contraction of spirit as often the effect of the latter. Sir Edwin Winter wisely considered that self-knowledge was of the first importance as a stable foundation for all excellence, and was of opinion with the Egyptian king, Sesostris, that the best method for his son to acquire this, was by associating him, during his education, with a few others of similar rank with himself, and amongst whom he would be in no danger of being corrupted by that species of idolatry which is too commonly paid to the mere adventitious circumstances of wealth and birth.

Such was the family, into whose hands an overruling Providence had conducted the poor banished Afibi, who soon returning, received a

kind encouraging assurance from her mistress, and then cheerfully attended Mrs. Eleanor Winter to her carriage. This lady was highly gratified at the complete success of her visit, and she and Afibi at once felt acquainted, for kindred spirits soon recognise each other, and a mere disparity in rank or fortune is no impediment to their ready union. Mrs. Eleanor inquired respecting Miss Belmour, and Afibi replied, "Miss Belmour, madam, one very good friend to me and Yamoussa; poor lady, she die, and I no see her again. I would die, if make Miss Belmour well. I like go back to West Indies if make Miss Belmour not die." "And do you like England, Afibi?" asked Mrs. Eleanor. "Oh yes! madam," she replied; "England very fine country: Mrs. Partho tell me English people all come good, and no more go to my country, Africa, to buy negro for West Indies: then black people very glad, very happy, and not be afraid when they see white people." Thus they chatted *tête-à-tête*, until the sound of the rookery reminded Mrs. Eleanor that she was near home. "I have a number of little boys and girls," she then observed, "who are anxious to see

Yamoussa happy, and are now waiting impatiently, in hopes I shall bring them news of you."

The carriage no sooner stopped, than Mrs. Eleanor pointed out the children to Afibi, who were all crowded to the school-room window in order that they might see who alighted from it; and were only prevented obeying the impulse to run down to meet their aunt, by the gentle authority of Mrs. Pontin, who declared that it would be obtrusive to go until their aunt should think proper to send for them.

Mrs. Eleanor Winter first conducted Afibi into the housekeeper's room, and desired that Yamoussa might be sent to her there, so that the brother and sister should have their first meeting without a number of curious witnesses: for Mrs. Eleanor always made her own feelings the standard by which to judge those of others. Our Saviour's golden rule, being one early learnt, and in constant use with her.

After introducing Yamoussa and Afiba to each other, they were told that they were at liberty to walk in the garden, and a female servant was desired to shew them the way to an alcove by the fish pond, where Mrs. Eleanor

announced that she would meet them in three hours, and introduce the children, after they should have eaten their dinners.

Mrs. Eleanor next informed her nieces of the success of her visit, at the same time detailing to them the particulars of it, and concluded with the arrangement she had made: she then left the young ones to eat their dinner, and the emancipated slaves to congratulate each other on their singular good fortune.

After the children had dined, their aunt took them into the garden, where, by the Alcove, they espied Yamoussa and Afibi, arm in arm. Delighted at the sight, they flocked around them, and, after Mrs. Eleanor had introduced them to each other, she requested Afibi to relate her little history; adding, that she and her young friends would sit in the Alcove and listen to it, whilst she and her brother seated themselves on the bank of the pond, under the shade of a tree; Afibi cheerfully obeyed this request, and the following narrative is that she detailed, with no other alteration than corrected English; for although her language was perfectly intelligible, and more correct than Yamoussa's, yet as children are often observed

to catch any peculiarity of idiom when used by a person who has engaged their affections or forcibly struck their imaginations, it is judged better to avoid, in the present case, giving them further opportunities of doing this, and thus spare them the greatest of all trouble, that of unlearning.

“ You know, ladies, that my name is Afibi, and that Yamoussa is my brother. We lived happily in Africa, with our parents, who were of free condition, until one day that we happened to go bathing together, with several others. On that occasion, just as we had quitted the water, a boat full of white people came on-shore, and seizing as many of us as they could, forced gags in our mouths, and dragged us away to their boat. One woman, (my cousin,) who had a little infant in her arms, struggled very much not to go, upon which the white men snatched the child from her and carried it into the boat, supposing the distressed mother would follow. In this, however, they were mistaken, for she remained crying pitiously on the shore, begging for her child. The white men, finding she would not follow it, threw the poor babe into the sea, and put us black people on-board a ship, and crammed us down

in the dark part of it, called the hold ; a place in which we could scarcely move or breathe, and where some of us soon died for want of sufficient air. I was so frightened at seeing the baby thrown into the water, that for some time I did nothing but cry and grieve. At length I distinguished amongst the voices of my fellow captives, that of my brother, Yamoussa ; I spoke to him and he answered me : I was fearful more of our family were with us, but Yamoussa eased me of these apprehensions, by assuring me that the rest of it had escaped. After tossing about a long time at sea, and suffering much from the captain, who was a cruel man, and gave us little to eat, and that of very bad food, we arrived at Jamaica, where we were driven to the market to be sold in different lots. Oh ! ladies ; I cannot tell you how frightened I was in my heart then, for black people in Africa think that the sea is a great salt river, across which white people live, and that these white people buy negroes to sell them to another great people still further off, to eat them. Now, I know better ; and should be much happier if I could tell our father and mother so too. Yamoussa

and I happened to be in the same lot, which was purchased by a rich planter, who was Mr. Belmour, and we were then marked in the shoulder with a hot iron with the initials of his name. As we were nearly of an age, Yamoussa being fifteen and I fourteen years old, we belonged to the same gang of slaves, which was the second, and whose work was lighter and proportioned to our strength, although it kept us employed the usual hours to labour. We were, however, young and healthy, and performed our tasks willingly; in consequence of which we escaped the lash of the whip. In the evening we retired from our day's toil to the huts of the two old black people, with whom we were placed; for it is a good custom in Jamaica to distribute the newly imported slaves as pensioners amongst the old negroes, in their provision grounds; these instruct them in their duty, and tend to reconcile them to their new situation. The strangers are ever after considered by the old people as their adopted children, who in turn call them parents, and venerate them as such. We used there to talk of Africa, and bring back the recollection of the scenes of the

youth of these our country-people and adopted parents; who, fortunately for them and for us, happened to be of our own nation. They endeavoured by kindness to reconcile us to that change which they had ceased to regret; and we became, in a few months, resigned at least to our destiny.

Before the first year of our slavery was ended, Miss Belmour wished to have a slave-girl to attend her, and her father desired his overseer to look out from the second class one who, from docility, might answer the wishes of his daughter: he pitched upon me, and I was accordingly taken from the field to live in a fine house, and wait upon Miss Belmour, who was at that time in much grief for the loss of her mother. Ah! poor Miss Belmour! good Miss Belmour! she taught me English, and instructed me every day in reading; and, when I could read, in writing also; above all she taught me to know God, and would tell me, that, if I was resigned to my condition of slavery, which He permitted, that this Great Being would bless me with content in this world, and, for the sake of his Son, Jesus

Christ, who had died to save sinners, would take me to Heaven when I died.

When I could read, I found myself much happier, for I used to employ many hours at my book, and soon learnt that all Miss Belmour told me was true; and I was comforted with the hopes of meeting my friends again in Heaven, although I must never more see them in this world. Reading, in short, made me so happy, that I was ever wishing Yamoussa could enjoy the same advantages, and so in time he did.

Miss Belmour would often question me about Africa, and, when I told her how I lived there, and the manner in which I was torn away from my friends, she would shed tears of pity, and endeavour to comfort me. At length, encouraged by her gentleness and kindness, I ventured to speak to her about poor Yamoussa; for he, whom I loved so dearly, I could not bear to think was toiling all day in the fields, whilst I led a life of ease. Miss Belmour was so desirous to make me quite happy, if she could, that she begged her father to permit Yamoussa also to become a servant in his family. Mr. Belmour obliged his

daughter, though he told her that Yamoussa was reported to be the best slave on his plantation. We then lived together, with the kindest mistress in the world, and with light work to perform; and should have been completely happy could we have forgotten Africa, and the dear relations we had left in it; but the thoughts that we should never see either again, would sometimes fill our hearts with sadness, and our eyes with tears; until the recollection of Miss Belmour's lessons, which were those of God's book, made very easy for us, would calm our spirits, and remind us to thank God for his mercy towards us, and lead us to resolve to do every thing in our power to please Him, whose care over us had been so plainly marked.

At length Miss Belmour, who had not been well since her mother's death, became so ill, that the physician recommended change of air to a distant and different climate; and Mr. Belmour, alarmed for his daughter, determined to send her to England, and did so, as soon as a ship was ready, with myself and Yamoussa to attend her. On our arrival in England, we were put into handsome lodgings

near Mr. Belmour's agent, by whom they were procured for us. Here my mistress grew gradually worse and worse, the uneasiness of her mind increasing her complaints: this was occasioned by the silence of her father, from whom she never received a single letter, and from a rumour that reached her that he was about to enter on a second engagement of marriage. This, however, was not the worst; for, before the end of fourteen months, Miss Belmour had spent all her money, and, on making application to Mr. Brown for a further supply, was told, in a kind manner, that her father's affairs were in a very embarrassed state, and that his own were materially involved with them. He then proposed to my mistress to come to his house, where she should be welcome, and his mother would take every possible care of her: and, for her black servants, it would be better for them, for the present at least, to get into other services; a business which he would take the trouble of managing for her. Accordingly, I was sent to live with Mrs. Partho, and Yamoussa to serve a captain Dixon, a friend of Mr. Brown: this gentleman, he tells me, is dead; so that he must go back to Mr. Brown in order to get another master. Poor Miss

Belmour was very sorry to send us away, but she said there would be nobody to take care of us when she died, and she was afraid that her father would expect Mr. Brown to send us back to the West Indies, where she knew we should be miserable without her.—This, ladies, is our history.”

Mrs. Eleanor thanked her for it, and the children joined their acknowledgments, which were concluded by their aunt's promise to supply Miss Belmour's place to Afibi and her brother, while they continued to conduct themselves well. Mrs. Eleanor added, that Yamoussa should remain at the castle as the servant of little Roger, that he should be paid justly for his service, and thus be enabled to save some little money against he should become old.


Here, amidst tears, the brother and sister expressed their thanks. Sir Edwin's children received the objects before them with delight; for, being thus early habituated to discriminate worth in their species, no prejudice against color existed in their minds.

The Misses Spicer were sullen observers of the whole scene, and somewhat indignant that

a black should possess the power to excite an interest in her auditors for the injured race to which she belonged.

Mrs. Eleanor retired with her party, and left her humble guests to enjoy their own chat by themselves; and, in the evening, sent Afibi back to Mrs. Partho, while she detained Yamoussa, and placed him among the domestics of her brother.

PART II.



THE following afternoon Mrs. Eleanor proposed a little variety in their walk, at which all were pleased but the Misses Spicer: these young ladies reluctantly accompanied their aunt and cousins; and, full of ill-humour and impertinent sarcasm, were ever expressing the impatience they felt for the return of their parents from Stowel races.

The only apology for the conduct of these young ladies was that of their mother towards them. The character of Mrs. Spicer was in every particular the very reverse of that of her sister Eleanor. Mrs. Spicer had married very early in life, and immediately afterwards accompanied her husband to his estate on the Island of Jamaica, where the vain and volatile turn of her mind assimilated with the luxurious

habits of that country, and their usual accompaniment, dissipated pleasure.

Mrs. Spicer kept her daughters in the West Indies, under a governess, to whom she allowed no authority, and whose place had since been supplied by another on similar terms, but who could not be persuaded to submit long to so degraded a situation. A third governess, tempted by a large salary, and the reputed liberality of West Indians, had ventured to make experiment of the Misses Spicer; but, as her predecessors had done, she resigned the task, preferring credit to emolument. These young ladies, therefore, at the ages of fourteen and fifteen, full of pride, prejudice, and vanity, were left to the injudicious care of their mother, who remained at home with them only when she had no engagements to go abroad; but, as these occurred very frequently, the young ladies were often, and indeed always, left at home with servants, except on the occasions of several days' absence together, when Mrs. Spicer made no ceremony of making a convenience of Sir Edwin's house, and would send her girls to the care of her good sister, Eleanor.

Mrs. Eleanor Winter, fully aware of the situation of her nieces, had frequently recommended it to their parents to send them to school ; for, although no advocate for boarding-schools of any fashion, where a private education for girls could be properly conducted, she yet considered that, in particular instances, they might be advisable, and rightly judged that her sister's family was one of those instances ; for what her nieces saw and heard, in their occasional visits at the castle, was completely counteracted by the habits of their home ; and Mrs. Eleanor thought that, if they only learnt to bear restraint, and to have some little notion of order, even these points were more than could be acquired under their own roof. Mrs. Spicer, however, happened to possess a vague prejudice against schools, to the exclusion of all exceptions in their favour ; and Mrs. Eleanor, finding her opinion on the subject disregarded, prudently suppressed further advice respecting the disposal of her nieces.

It was agreed to walk over the Heath, which was distant about three quarters of a mile from the castle ; and, as they came to a valley

from which the Heath-hill rose, Miss Winter observed to her aunt that she had heard Mrs. Caudle say, that, when she was a young woman, a man had been hung in chains a few yards on the road side, for killing another, who was his friend, companion, and benefactor.

MRS. ELEANOR.

Mrs. Caudle told you a truth, Emma; and I dare say she recollects the event distinctly. It was a shocking story, and made so strong an impression on the minds of both old and young, that tradition alone will hand it down to remote posterity. I was a very little girl when it happened, and saw, from the window of the mill-house before us, the murderer pass by to execution. The procession is still fresh in my memory; and, as I view the picture of it in retrospect, I feel a renewed abhorrence at the vices of avarice and ingratitude, which I wish may be as indelibly fixed in the hearts of you all as it is in my own.

ELLEN.

Pray, aunt, what was the story? Though I am always a little uncomfortable at hearing

very shocking tales, I cannot help the wish to know this ; will you, therefore, indulge us with the relation of it ?

MRS. ELEANOR.

To walk, and tell stories, is rather severe duty, Ellen ; and the one which has awakened your interest, is not of the description I exactly approve : however, as my objections are not very important, and the tale is short, and the ascent before us gentle, I will not refuse to gratify the curiosity I have excited.

Here all the children looked round, as if impelled by a common feeling to espy, or rather to imagine, where the fatal gibbet stood, for time had long destroyed every vestige of it : Mrs. Eleanor then spoke. “ It is five and forty years ago since the object for which you now look in vain, stood a few yards within the right hand hedge, as a beacon to deter passengers from the passion of avarice, and the crime of ingratitude. Martin and Francis lived servants together in a foreign country ; the latter, by dint of honesty, industry, and frugality, had been enabled to save a small sum of money, which he designed should aid him as

his power of labor declined, or the feebleness of old age compelled him to rest from it altogether: the former, having been neither the one nor the other, had made no provision for the hours of sickness or old age, seasons of which he had not thought. These men came to England in the same ship; but very different objects rendered them associates in it. Francis made a voyage to attend the marriage of his old master's only son, to whom he had been attached from his infancy; and Martin, because he was idle, and thence restless and dissatisfied, and sought a change, the usual resource of such as are tired of themselves. During the passage to England, Martin insinuated himself into the good opinion of Francis, who was persuaded, through a plausible tale, that he was an injured and unfortunate man; and the superior acquirements of Martin, for he could read, write, and cypher, were considered by the ingenuous Francis, who could do neither, with that respect which humble minds are prone to feel towards those they think better instructed than themselves.

They reached England, and landed at the place at which they were to separate. Martin

affected great regret on the occasion, and persuaded his friend to accompany him to his father's house, which he assured him was directly in the road he must take to reach his destination. Not doubting but such was really the case, Francis complied with the wishes of Martin; and, having proceeded twelve miles together, they stopped at a petty inn to take some refreshment. As they did this, Martin observed that they must strike off the high road, as his father's house was six miles out of the direction of it. This declaration was unexpected, and Francis objected to go, being impatient to join his young master; but at the same time he assured Martin that he would see him again as soon as he could, and, having said so, he begged him to keep up his spirits, and rest satisfied that he should not want while he possessed any thing to give him. At this point of the discourse Francis offered his companion some money, which was accepted with seeming reluctance; and the latter immediately resumed his entreaties that Francis would accompany him home, with so much vehemence that, alas! credulous friendship was persuaded from its purpose, and avarice and ingratitude exulted.

in the successful pleadings of dissimulation. Several persons in the inn either saw or heard what passed between the travellers. At length they arose to finish their journey, when, arriving at this spot, Martin accomplished the wicked purpose of his heart; attacked his unsuspecting friend, and with repeated blows deprived him of life, and afterwards buried his victim under yonder sod; then possessing himself of the watch and money of his friend, he proceeded on his way, and reached the cottage of his father, whose grey hairs he was soon to bring down *with sorrow to the grave*.

The abandoned wretch was quickly overtaken by justice, and suffered the sentence of the law in this place; and the ingratitude of the perfidious, wicked Martin is to this day proverbial amongst the lower classes in this part of the country.

ELLEN.

What a dreadfully wicked creature that Martin was; the very thoughts of him make me shudder.

EMMA.

There is, however, some satisfaction in thinking that he was punished.

MRS. PONTIN.

A murderer seldom escapes the pursuit of justice ; and, as you observe, Ellen, there is a species of consolation in the reflection that it soon secured this atrocious one ; “ for the mind of man,” as a very wise writer remarks, “ is naturally a lover of justice :” and, when we read a story in which a criminal is overtaken, in whom there is no quality which is the object of pity, the soul enjoys a certain revenge for the offence done to its nature in the wicked action committed, and also a satisfaction in the idea that an enemy to society is prevented from doing it further mischief.

MISS SPICER.

Indeed, aunt, this is quite a shocking newspaper story : why the fellow Martin was as bad as a black !

MRS. ELEANOR.

And what think you of his unfortunate friend, Francis ?

MISS SPICER.

Oh ! he was a sweet man, and I quite *adore* his character, although he was but a servant :

for it is right to give people *their due*, let them be what they may.

MRS. ELEANOR.

I give you credit for the candour of your sentiment, Gertrude ; but I cannot approve the strong terms you use, which are vulgar and impious. The word *adore* is applicable to the Deity alone ; and, although it is too commonly used to the most insignificant objects by many young people, who had rather be thought modish than modest or pious, the nature of the word is not changed by that circumstance ; and my ears can never become reconciled to an irreverent use of it, nor can I suffer our dear little girls to imagine that a careless misapplication of such a word is a slight offence.

I am sorry to perceive you offended ; yet you must attend to my observations on this subject, if in turn you would not offend me.—To conclude my tale of the dissimilar friends : Martin was an overseer of slaves on a small plantation ; Francis, a poor negro slave from his very birth, but who had, from a highly meritorious conduct, been presented with his freedom, and followed some mechanical employment

which he had been taught by the care of his old master's son, to whom he was also indebted for the former blessing, and at whose request he was now induced to make a voyage to England on the occasion before mentioned.

MISS SPICER.

And so my sweet man Francis was really a blacky! Wonders will never cease!

MRS. ELEANOR.

The character drawn of the poor negro by the hand best qualified to give it justly,* is, on the whole, more than an amiable one, and in all points calculated to lower the pride of many Europeans who are but too much inclined to arrogate to themselves the chief excellencies of both head and heart. You have, however, shewn us that you can discriminate justly; and I shall hope it may be a prelude to the entire removal of your prejudice against *blacks*. Apparently, indeed, there is a difference between them and Europeans; but nothing different in kind from that which you may remark

* Mungo Park.

in children of the same family : and you must ever keep in mind that *all* creatures, rational and irrational, are much influenced in their characters, and appearances, too, by circumstances. Suppose, for example, Anna and Ellen to have lived from their birth with those vagabond gipsies under yonder low tent which shelters them from the rays of the mid-day sun, and imperfectly from the wind and rain : do you think they would either look, act, or feel, as they now do, born, reared, and instructed, as they have been in their father's house ? No, my children ; assuredly not. Be thankful, therefore, for the superior privileges you enjoy ; and, while your hearts warm with gratitude to that great Being, " from whom cometh every good and perfect gift," and who has been so bountiful to you, remember to make allowances for all such persons, of whatever rank, nation, or colour, soever, who have not been favored with your advantages.

MISS WINTER.

I hope, my dear aunt, we shall endeavour to remember your instruction. But, may I ask, for I have before wished to do so, who

those gipsies are; for every summer since I can recollect, a party of them have constantly pitched exactly where we now perceive them? They are not like our poor people; but I do think that they all have a resemblance to Solomon the Jew, who comes round the village, about once in a quarter of a year, to tempt us to buy his pretty trinkets.

MRS. ELEANOR.

The gipsies have, certainly, much of the Eastern face; but who they are, Emma, is a question I am unable to answer: but thus much I know; their singular lives and appearance have excited the industry of the historian, and the curiosity of the antiquarian, though neither have been able to disperse the clouds which obscure their origin. The gipsies live in all parts of the world; and came into Europe about the fifteenth century. Some suppose them emigrants from Egypt, since that country refused to submit to the Turkish yoke; but the opinion is difficult to credit, because the gipsies live in Egypt as among us, and are there also considered as foreigners. Others think them emigrants from Hindostan. In

short, who they are cannot be asserted with any certainty; and it is of little moment, though it is thought, from circumstances attending them, that there is good ground for supposing them emigrants from Africa, or Asia, at some period, in consequence of national convulsion and general persecution. *What* the gipsies are, is however easily answered. Their character and occupation are the same in every country; the former is invariably that of idle, depraved vagabonds, living together without any moral restraint; and, as to the latter, they exist by a system of cheating and petty pilfering, through the medium of fortune-telling, horse-jobbing, tinkering work, &c. They speak the language of the country in which they live, and have, besides, a jargon of their own.

MARY.

Is it true, aunt, that gipsies steal children?

MRS. PONTIN.

Ah! my little Mary, have you found your tongue, and at length ventured a question? It is true that gipsies have stolen children, but it cannot be a frequent practice with them; for,

if it were so, the whole country would rise in resentment against them, and their wandering community would shortly be exterminated,—that is, Mary; all destroyed.

MARY.

But did you, ma'am, ever know of any person stolen by gipsies?

MRS. PONTIN.

No, my dear, I cannot say I ever *knew* of any person so stolen; though I have heard of one who was, but I cannot recollect the circumstances of the story with sufficient precision to venture to relate it to you; and you know I have sometimes had occasion to guard *you* against beginning any narration, unless certain that you can bring it to a clear termination. It is far better to sit silent and listen to others, than be an unprepared or a disqualified speaker: therefore, Mary, my example must not be at variance with my precept.

MRS. ELEANOR.

I know a person, Mary, who really was

carried away by such gipsies as are at this moment in our view.

MISS SPICER.,

And pray, aunt, what kind of an animal is the person; does it tell fortunes, and excel in all the crafty skill of the gipsies?

MRS. ELEANOR.

He is not a bad character, Gertrude; which is saying much in his favour; but he is defective in all the acquirements of a gentleman, and is shy and reserved in society, with which, indeed, he is not fond of mixing.

MISS SPICER.

And pray, my good aunt, for you have raised my curiosity, who is this *quiz*, for I am sure he must be one, and what is his name, and where can he live? Bless me! I should amazingly like to see him, and I would positively ask him to tell my fortune.

MRS. ELEANOR.

Then you would positively do a very rude and unfeeling action, and I must refuse to gra-

tify your curiosity, unless you retract that declaration. I should not easily forgive myself for putting it in the power of a thoughtless, uneducated girl, to give pain to an inoffensive individual.

MISS SPICER.

Well, aunt, I retract the intention I expressed, and promise to hold my tongue if ever I meet the stolen gentleman; although I must say I think there is no harm whatever in a little innocent quizzing, and that is all I should wish. But, aunt, though I may be thoughtless, I am sure you cannot say I am uneducated; for I am certain no girls have had more masters than Julia and I, and papa does not care what expense he is at for them, so we are but satisfied.

MRS. ELEANOR.

It is very true that you have had abundance of masters, Gertrude; and as true, that you have yet every thing to learn,—and I wish you stood alone in your predicament. Time, I hope, may improve it; and it certainly will, if you can resolve to yield to correction.

I would beg you to check, until you entirely conquer, the disposition to what is termed, *quizzing*; which is indeed a most impertinent and uncharitable mode of *badinage*, because commonly exercised on persons possessing either awkwardness, or some weakness of character.

MISS WINTER.

That word, *quizzing*, is one of dear Frank's, aunt; and I have never, cousin Gertrude, rightly understood what it meant. Now, I perceive, it is turning people into ridicule, and then laughing at them; which, I hope, I shall never do as long as I live.

MRS. PONTIN.

And do not, my dear Emma, adopt the practise of quizzing any more than the word, which is one selected from the *cant* vocabulary, that is daily becoming enlarged, to the great injury of a pure idiom.

MISS SPICER.

And pray, Mrs. Pontin, what is your objection to the word, quizzing? I am sure I have heard very genteel people use it; as well as my own

papa, and he is reckoned a very sensible man by every body. And pray, ma'am, what do you mean by the word *cant*?

MRS. PONTIN.

By the word *cant*, you are, according to the best authority, to understand a corrupt dialect used by beggars and vagabonds; a barbarous jargon, in short, which is a form of speaking peculiar to some certain class or body of men, and for which thieves and sharpers are most remarkable. These attach a sense to words and phrases which have no literal signification, and are merely understood by those in the secret of their particular meaning. I leave you, therefore, to judge, after this explanation, whether the *cant* vocabulary be proper for well educated people. For my own part, when I hear persons in the frequent use of these strange words and phrases, I cannot help feeling a little suspicious that the society they have kept cannot have been of the correctest sort. Besides, as habits are conquered with great difficulty, I would have my little girls, and indeed all young people, be much on their guard, how they con-

tract a single bad custom, either in manner or speech.

MISS SPICER.

I firmly believe that aunt Eleanor and Mrs. Pontin would have people all perfection, and, if I did not know that both were good-natured, I should be frightened to death to open my lips before them. But, good aunt, do now tell me what you were going to do before poor quizzing drew a sermon on me.

MRS. ELEANOR.

It is fair to gratify the curiosity we excite. Here then is the story:—Mr. Partridge, for that is the gentleman's name, lives at Covey Hall, and is the only son of a worthy and respectable man, from whom he inherits about fifteen hundred pounds a-year. During Mr. Partridge's infancy he was stolen by a gang of gipsies, who used to frequent his father's neighbourhood; where, after repeated acts of pilfering, they were detected by his shepherd in the very deed of killing a sheep, for the carcass of which they intended to go in the morning, and beg for as one of an animal which had

died,—a well-known practice this amongst the gipsies. For this dishonesty, old Mr. Partridge prosecuted them, and they suffered the judgment of the law for their transgression. The whole party, in consequence, determined to be revenged, but in what way they could not resolve; until a young mother, in their company, suggested, as the best plan, to steal away the infant heir. This was applauded as a complete mode of revenge for that just punishment of an offence which, by their creed of morals, they considered as injustice. The gipsies, however, on this occasion, felt themselves at first in the predicament of the old mice when they approved the council that the young ones gave them; they admitted that the expedient was excellent, but were at a loss who should tie the bell. Here, however, the simile ceases; for the young gipsy who proposed the measure, relieved the perplexity of her friends, and readily undertook to execute it herself, which she effected in the following manner. She watched the nurse-maid, and found out her favourite ramble: here, then, she sought her, and so far engaged her ear and attention that she did not leave her until it was fixed

that, on a particular day, she would again meet her, with some of her acquaintance as idly disposed as herself, for the purpose of having their fortunes told. The maid, with the infant and her associates, was punctual to the time; but, the young sibyl not appearing, they resolved to go to the head-quarters of the gipsies, in a lane a field or two off, to seek her. This was exactly what the gipsy, who was hid behind the hedge with another, expected. The maid, in order to run, and so return with more expedition, placed the sleeping infant under a tree, and covered it with her apron, not intending to be absent above twenty minutes. No sooner were these idle females gone, than the young gipsy sprang over the hedge from her concealment, took up the child, and, delivering it to her companion to carry to a distance as previously agreed upon, went after her dupes. The poor nurse-maid was soon more an object of pity than of anger. She returned home with a heavy heart, for her fortune had been predicted a sad one by those who had determined on making it so; and, when she missed her child, "it was all out." She ran, she searched, she raved, the babe was gone,

and she was undone. She reached home almost distracted, told how she had acted, and threw herself on her knees before her master and mistress, whose feelings are better imagined than described. The girl was dismissed, and took her imprudence and breach of trust so heavily to heart, that she became deranged, and used to travel all about the country with a basket on her arm, full of field flowers and herbs, which she gathered, she would tell people, for her baby. Every exertion of the parents for the recovery of the infant proved ineffectual; and year succeeded year, until hope, as they also wished to believe their child, was dead; and as the most striking object, when viewed from a far distance, dwindles into an unimportant point, from which we willingly withdraw our wearied eyes; so the heaviest misfortune, when contemplated through a long interval of time, lessens to the mind, and loses its poignancy, till the sufferer can recur to it without those agonizing emotions that it first occasioned.

It so happened, however, that, after the space of fourteen years, this Mr. Partridge was most unexpectedly restored to his family by

the mother of the gipsy who had stolen him so many years before. This depraved creature died in consequence of child-birth, and, in her despair of recovery, had been seized with compunction for the deed she had committed, and exacted from her mother a promise to restore the boy, which she did to the astonishment and doubting joy of his parents. So you see, that even in this wicked and irreligious woman, "Conscience, that candle of the Lord," could not be quenched. The old nurse, who was still living, recognized her infant charge by indubitable marks on his person, which were corroborated by the coral and bells, and gold clasps of his shoes, the former bearing the child's cypher and crest. Young Partridge very soon became reconciled to a new mode of life, and returned the tenderness and assiduity of his family in their treatment of him with affection and docility. He was, as you may suppose, wholly destitute of education ; and, his mind being naturally dull, and never having been bent to mental application, he found it an arduous task to acquire the requisite and common arts of reading, writing, and arithmetic. He had, however, a sound, though a slow, apprehen-

sion ; and, possessing a good memory, he retained whatever he once understood. He saw quickly into living character, and learnt human nature from observation rather than from books, which cost him too much trouble to study. A consciousness of his defective education kept him reserved in society, and unwilling to increase his acquaintance in life : he is, however, much attached to his family, the female part of which are now living ; and, I have heard them express, that they were often inclined to believe that good had grown out of evil in their house ; for that, had their only brother been educated suitably to his fortune and situation in life, they could scarcely have expected to have found him so domestic and attached to them, since other objects would probably have occupied his time and shared his affection. However this reasoning might be disputed, it would have been cruel to prove its fallacy, since their own conclusions contributed to their individual happiness, and injured not that of others.

Mr. Partridge recollects to have passed his own house several summers, but never received a hint of who he was. He is observed to be

kind in his conduct to his old guardians, the gipsies ; at the same time, that he always commemorates the day of his restoration to his family, an event that happened at Whitsuntide, when the Village of Oaks and Covey Hall are scenes of rural joy and festivity. In the former, the peasants have dances on the green, with the rustic amusement of the jingle, &c. while the lawn before the manor-house is enlivened by the Maurice or Moorish dancers, and other rural recreations. I have listened to some of Mr. Partridge's accounts of the gipsies, which he will occasionally give before a very few of the friends of his mother and sisters : but he always expresses, that he was kindly treated by them all, and particularly so by the woman who stole him away, and whose son he supposed himself to be ; and, that the only task of irksomeness he ever remembered to have been imposed on him, was that of nursing a peevish child of his supposed mother.

ELLEN.

I think, however, aunt, that the gipsies cannot be so bad as they are represented, or they would not have treated him so well.

MRS. ELEANOR.

That circumstance, Ellen, does not balance against their general bad character. The gipsies are attached to their wandering community, and careful to preserve it from diminution : and, when it happens that they adopt a stranger amongst them, they look upon him as an acquisition, and he is treated precisely the same as a natural-born subject would be. In short, the regard the gipsies shew the individual they thus adopt, is exactly similar to that evinced by the ferocious savages of the New World, who consider that the occasional adoption of a member into their tribe, supports or increases its strength. Policy, then, is the motive which actuates alike the savages and the gipsies ; yet the former are nevertheless relentless and unprincipled barbarians, except where their caprice or convenience makes them otherwise ; and the latter do not merit a superior character to that given them, because their partial kindness is not excited by any better motive ; and, you see, the act of stealing away the infant gratified their revenge, at the same time that it answered their own political

views, which would have been frustrated by any injury of the child.

LOUISA.

I see this very clearly, aunt ; but, as gipsies are such bad people, I wonder papa does not send them to prison.

MRS. ELEANOR.

Because, my dear, your papa has no more right to do so than any other person, unless the gipsies break the laws of the land ; in which case, as in that of Mr. Partridge, they may be sent to prison by those against whom they offend. The gipsies are considered a general nuisance ; and it is much to be wished that government, in its wisdom, may devise some method, consistent with humanity, to fix them in regular habits of life ; although I could never consent that in this we should copy the example that our neighbours the French have given us, which is indeed, I think, a very cruel one.

MISS SPICER.

Pray, aunt, what is that ?

MRS. ELEANOR.

I will tell you, since you are at present unable to read the work* from whence I derive my information on this point, first premising, that the history of the gipsies is not better understood by the French than by us. The French assert, that they were a community from the time of Augustus and Tiberius, and went to Rome under the name of Egyptians, (which, say the French, the English still call them,) and sold little images of Iris and Osiris, and told fortunes to the masters of the world.

In the year 1804, Monsieur de Castelane, then Prefect of the Lower Pyrences, received orders from the French government to clear the country of the gipsies who were dispersed about in twenty different places. In a single night, all were taken as in a net, and conducted on-board vessels, which landed them on the coast of Africa. This rigorous proceeding, which received all the indulgence that could be claimed from justice and humanity, was a real benefit to the department; but what this indulgence

* L'Hermitte de Guiane en Provence.

was, is not told us ; and it is difficult to conceive any that could balance the severity of the measure. For, independent in their vagrant lives, and passing them in a fine temperate climate, amongst highly civilized people, who were protectors to their community, what must have been their misery, landed on a foreign shore, in a climate which operates as a plague on the European constitution, and amongst a people with whom slavery is the established system from time immemorial. Three fourths of the people of Africa are slaves, nor are they ever likely to be free, until the glorious light of the Gospel shall enlighten their minds, and teach them truly what man owes to his fellow-man.

MISS WINTER.

Are there a great many gipsies, aunt?

MRS. ELEANOR.

A great many, Emma ; the computation given is, that Europe alone contains above seven hundred thousand, although the stragglers we see give us no idea of such a number in the total.—I think, now, you must be full

as well acquainted with the gipsies as you can desire to be, and we will rest ourselves and return home.

Nothing could be more delightful than the prospect from the summit of the Heath on which the wild thyme and broom blended their scents. The windmill and mill-house were the sole objects of human labour observable on it ; to the latter, which belonged to Sir Edwin, the party directed their steps ; and, after Mrs. Eleanor, whom talking had fatigued, had rested herself, the young ones proposed to return to the castle another way, which their aunt approved of, as she did not wish to strengthen, in their minds, the disagreeable impressions that the gibbet, and its accompanying story, had given rise to.

Mrs. Eleanor, who was at all times a welcome visitor in the school-room, was doubly so this evening. The rain had fallen in such frequent and heavy showers during the day, that the children were obliged to relinquish the expectation of their regular walk ; but they flattered themselves that, if their aunt had no engagement with company, they should enjoy the pleasure

of her society. They were not disappointed. Mrs. Eleanor entered their apartment early, followed by a pleasing, modest-looking young woman, about sixteen years of age, who had her arms loaded with work-baskets. "I have brought you presents, my children; for which you are obliged to Phebe Rose." The children all flocked round Phebe, expressing their approbation that she had ornamented them so prettily. "We shall keep our work so neatly, aunt, now we have such convenient little baskets with covers; indeed, they are much better than bags, and Mrs. Pontin shall find them in great order." Thus they ran on, delighted with something new. Mrs. Eleanor presented each little girl with a basket; at the same time directing her to return thanks to Phebe, who was both the fabricator and donor of them. The baskets were closely woven with the finest osiers, ornamented with coloured stripes, in a fanciful and elegant manner, and altogether very pretty. The children expressed much pleasure in seeing Phebe, which was, doubtless, heightened by the mark of attention they had just received from her. Phebe now remarked the Misses Spicer, and apologised for not also

presenting them with baskets ; saying she was ignorant that any young ladies were visiting at the Castle, or she would not have omitted them ; but she would make two more baskets, if they would do her the honour to accept them. Julia Spicer condescended to thank her, but in a very ungracious manner. “ We are much obliged to you, young woman, but beg you will not give yourself so much unnecessary trouble : we never work ; and, if we did, we have several baskets about our house much more curious than these, which we brought from Jamaica, and were made by the Charaibs. If I think of it, the next time we come to the Castle I will bring a Charaib basket, as a new pattern for you ; for all industrious people should be encouraged.” Phebe curtsied, and thanked Miss Spicer ; and, then turning to Mrs. Eleanor, said she would, with her permission, go to the young gentlemen in the nursery, whom she had not forgotten, but had made an open basket for master Roger, and small ones, and rattles for his little brothers. “ You are at liberty to go, Phebe,” said Mrs. Eleanor, “ as soon as you have answered the further inquiries which I perceive your young

friends are anxious to make." Here the Misses Winter asked Phebe after her father, and little blind Tom, her brother. "They are both well, thank you, dear ladies; and my father daily blesses God for his goodness in raising himself and family such friends as your papa and aunt are: indeed, madam, I can ill express the sense we all have of our obligation to you both; but, for myself, I feel I owe you the service of my life."—"You are a good girl, Phebe, and we are abundantly rewarded for the interest we have taken in your welfare, in the conviction we feel that you are so grateful. But tell me, Phebe, does Tom yet venture to open the gate without shutting his eyes?" "He does, madam, oftener than he did, and I think in a little time more it will be quite easy to him."

MISS WINTER.

Why, Phebe, I should think Tom would be so glad at being able to see, that he would be almost unwilling to close his eyes, even to go to sleep.

MRS. PONTIN.

Your notion is not unnatural for your age

and proportion of knowledge, yet truth, as experience shews, differs from it ; for Tom Rose, having been blind from his infancy, had no recollection of light, and his touch and hearing conveyed to him all his ideas of objects ; and he opened the Lodge-gates with these faculties as his pilots so long, that it requires time, and a considerable time too, to follow any other. Eyes are Tom's new guides, which, like a wise boy, he trusts cautiously, having found safety without them ; but he will every day acquire confidence in them, and learn from experience the value of sight, the most spiritual, and consequently the most superior, of all the faculties with which God has endued his creatures.

Mrs. Eleanor now dismissed Phebe to get some refreshment, and to make her visit to the nursery ; after which she proposed to sit half an hour, the utmost time she could remain this evening, as she expected a neighbouring family to drink tea with her and Sir Edwin. A story being solicited by the children, Mrs. Eleanor replied, “ Suppose I give you the short history of an acquaintance, by way of a new story ; I think it may interest you, though containing nothing of the marvellous.”—“ Who is

the acquaintance?" was the general question. "Phebe Rose;" replied Mrs. Eleanor. "Oh," rejoined the young ones, "we shall all like to hear any thing of Phebe, because she is so good-natured!" Mrs. Eleanor then gratified them by the following narration.

THE BASKET GIRL.

It is exactly six years since I first saw Phebe Rose, and our acquaintance commenced in the following manner. One fine day, in an early part of the summer, I accompanied your papa in a walk, who was then about to fix upon a convenient spot of ground on which to build a few cottages, and was desirous of my opinion on the subject. With this object in view, we had passed the South Lodge, when our attention was attracted to a group sitting by the side of the plantation beyond it. A young girl, apparently about ten or eleven years old, was offering something to drink to a woman who sat leaning against a tree, but appeared too exhausted to take the proffered refreshment: beside her was a little boy, a

bundle of willows, and a cluster of light common baskets.

The appearance of distress drew us to the spot, to learn what was the matter; and the young girl, who was Phebe Rose, told us that her mother had been long in ill health, and was overcome with walking; but that, when she was better, they were going down to the great house, meaning the Castle, to ask permission of the gentlefolks, who they had heard as they came along were always very good to poor people, if they might rest three or four days in some of the out-offices, until her mother was able to continue her journey, where she could make a few trifles, and sell the baskets they had already on hand. I now perceived that the little boy by the poor woman was blind, and asked Phebe if he were born so. "Ah! no, madam," said she, "he caught the small-pox before he was a year old; he did not have it badly; but, after he got well, something came over his eyes, and made him blind. There was a doctor once told my mother, when we offered to sell some of our baskets at his house, that he could make Tom see as well as ever, if she would give him leave; but my

mother was afraid to do so. She takes his being blind sadly to heart, and often says—Waht will become of him when she is dead? I tell her, madam, that I will never forsake him while I live; and, as I can make the small common baskets and rattles as well as my mother, I dare say I could earn enough to maintain us both.” The woman, as Phebe finished this account, revived; she had been listening in languid silence to her daughter, and the tears ran down her pale, emaciated cheeks, while she ejaculated, “poor children!” at the same time attempting to rise, in order to make me a curtsy, as if to bespeak my compassion for them. But this was already engaged, as well as that of my brother, who desired the group to follow us. We then turned back to the Lodge, where we left the three individuals that composed it, desiring Judy Pink, who, you remember, died last winter of old age, to take care of them until we returned from our walk, in the course of which we determined in what manner we would dispose of the fainting travellers, and fixed upon lodging them for the present at the home farm, under the charge of Mrs. Ashwell, the bailiff’s wife, until the poor woman should

be in a state to pursue her route, wherever that might be.

Sir Edwin accomplished the object of our walk, and, by my recommendation, built the comfortable row of stone cottages, which is tenanted by those poor people we call our colonists.

ELLEN.

And why do you call them colonists, aunt ?

MRS. ELEANOR.

I will readily inform you, Ellen. Colonists are persons who quit their own country, and settle in some other ; and the tenants of those cottages are, through one cause or other, from different and distant parts, and very thriving colonists they are, because very industrious, orderly people, whose comfort and happiness are a constant source of pleasure to us.

ANNA.

Why, Ellen, I knew what colonists were, and I wonder you did not ; have you forgotten the play of the Colonists in the “ Evenings at home ? ”

ELLEN.

I have not read all the "Evenings at home," but I will take them up to-night, if you will tell me in which volume I shall find the play.

ANNA.

That I will; but you are to know that no idle person, or one of trifling habits, must think of becoming a colonist.

MRS. ELEANOR.

Very well remembered, Anna. The object of the play of the Colonists is to impress this truth on the minds of young persons of all classes, and a most useful one it is, since people cannot have just ideas of things too early; and many a restless spirit might have corrected itself and remained peaceably and quietly in its own country, if it had not formed false ideas of what another, and that generally a distant one, would afford.

MRS. PONTIN.

If you will remind me, I will point out to you a story, opposite to your questions and observations, which amused me very much the other

day ; at present, do not let us interrupt your good aunt's communication of your favourite Phebe.

MRS. ELEANOR,

I must hasten to conclude my narrative. As we returned from our walk, we called at the Lodge, and sent the travellers, as we proposed, to the care of the bailiff's wife, who is a woman of unpretending humanity, and who readily received them ; and at the same time promised her best exertions to recover the poor woman, who had, too apparently, the marks of a consumption upon her. Three days afterwards I called at the farm, and found Mary Rose full of thankfulness and composure ; Phebe, the picture of industry and content ; and little blind Tom, unconscious of his calamity, while each want was supplied, apparently perfectly happy. I thought it proper at this time to interrogate Mary Rose closely ; she replied to my questions with an ingenuousness that left me without suspicion of her veracity ; and, as nearly as I can recollect, in the following words :—

“My father and mother, madam, live at

Sapton, in Shropshire; they are poor, but industrious people, and brought us all up decently, in their way. I was twelve years ago married to Thomas Rose, who was, as well as his father, a basket-maker. As both our homes were small and the families in them large, and as it was hard to get a little cottage in the parish, except for such as had money enough to build one, my husband thought it better for us to travel from place to place, which we accordingly did. Thomas knew his business well, and taught it to me; and, being always willing to work, we gained a comfortable livelihood, and saved money besides. We used to please ourselves with thinking that, when we were worth fifty pounds, we would go home with credit, and build ourselves a little place on the common where we could get a good piece of ground for a garden. Twelve months after we married, Phebe was born; and, six years afterwards, Tom. In the course of this time we had saved a good deal towards the fifty pounds, and hoped in two years more to complete it. A year, however, after the birth of Tom, our fair prospects vanished, and my troubles, which I never expect to end in this

world, began. It happened one day that we went to a gentleman's house where a number of young ladies lived; they bought all our baskets, and took such a fancy to Phebe that they would have taken her and brought her up as a servant, for they said they should like to instruct such a pretty behaved girl; but we could not, for the world, part with her, as we could maintain her very well, and she was every day growing more and more useful; indeed, madam, though I say it, she is a dutiful and tender-hearted child. These ladies talked a great deal to us, and then ordered us refreshment, and, amongst them, gave Phebe a whole crown-piece, and desired us always to call when we came their way of the country. All this, madam, put us into great spirits; and the crown, which we thought a token of good luck, went into the money-box: but, indeed, it proved quite otherwise; for, just as we reached our lodgings for the night, and had our feet within the threshold, an officer, with a drawn sword, clapped my husband on the back, saying, "Press, or enter,"—and immediately several sailors seized my poor terrified Thomas, and forced him away, in spite of the cries of

his family. Ah, madam! it was a cruel sight; and never shall I forget it while I live. I cried myself almost blind, though that would not fetch him back, but made me so ill, that I could not move from the lodging. At length I grew better, and was glad to leave a place in which such trouble had overtaken me, and where there was no chance of seeing or hearing any thing of my husband; for the press-gang was seen to go out of the town directly with him, and I have never heard a word of him since. Indeed, how should I, madam? for if poor Thomas was able to write, he could not know where to find me, unless he directed to his own home; and there I have never been able to get; for, soon after I recovered, the children caught the small-pox, and both sickened together; and, when they got well, something in a short time covered Tommy's eyes, and he became quite dark. Well, then, madam,—with vexing about my child and my husband, I grew thin and weak, and then had a fever and ague, which made me unable to do any thing for six months; so that, what with paying for lodging, the doctor, and maintaining the poor children, the money-box was

emptied of all but Phebe's crown-piece. Out of it, indeed, I bought a few willows, for I thought, with these, Phebe and I could do a little work: but labouring beyond my strength, to support three of us, brought me so low, that I never expect again to be as I used to be. I have ever since been trying to get home, but have still above eighty long miles to go before I can reach it; and, though I do not like to return back to Sapton worse than I left it, there would be some comfort in leaving the children with our friends, who would take any trifle from the parish rather than they should go to the workhouse, where, thank God, not a Rose nor a Snell, for that was my maiden name, was ever known to go."—This was Mary Rose's tale, and it affected me extremely: the little spark of pride, discoverable in her reluctance to return home poorer than she quitted it, with her dislike to the workhouse as an asylum for her orphans, I could easily reconcile to those honest feelings of independence which I have observed are never felt, but by the most industrious and moral class of the poor, and which the knowledge of religion would properly regulate, and render consistent with Christian

humility. I asked Mary Rose if she were known to any respectable family in or near her native village ; to which she replied : “ Squire Goodman, of Dove Place, lives within a mile of Sapton, and he knows mine and my husband’s family very well, as honest and industrious people in his parish.”

I made no observation, but commended Phebe, and assured the poor woman that she should be supplied with every thing necessary and comfortable for her state, and that I should also take care of her children. On my return home I wrote to Mr. Goodman, and received a very satisfactory reply from him respecting the Roses ; upon which I proceeded to the farm with a view of being explicit, and of rendering still further consolation to Mary. I produced and read to her Mr. Goodman’s letter, and told her that, as soon as she felt herself strong enough to travel, she and her children should be safely conveyed to her own village, provided she still wished to be so. Mary accepted my proposal, but never recovered sufficient health to allow me to put my intention in execution. She lived, however, five months in a state of perfect resignation to the will of

God, and of pious preparation for that awful event which she was fully sensible no human skill could avert, and then died, leaving her orphans, in full confidence, to my care and disposal. Phebe, being an entire stranger to the families of her parents, was averse to the idea of going to them ; and, attached as she was to Mrs. Ashwell, she dreaded the thought of quitting her. This liking being mutual, I continued them together ; and Phebe became as a child to Mrs. Ashwell, whose family were all disposed of in life, and a nurse to her little blind brother. Thus Phebe lived until she reached the age of fourteen, when a letter from her maternal grandfather informed her, that her father had written home to inquire after his wife and children ; and to say, that, having lost a leg in the service of his king and country, he was in daily expectation of getting his discharge, when he should make the best of his way home. This information, as you may suppose, was a source of great joy to Phebe, who distinctly remembered her father, and the distressing way in which he was separated from his family. A short time afterwards Rose arrived and completed her happiness ; and our next business

was how to settle him and his children together. The Northern Lodge was just then vacant ; and Sir Edwin proposed to Rose, who is a very honest fellow, that he, with his girl and boy, should occupy it, as the allowance as keeper of it, with the joint industry of himself and family at his trade, would support them comfortably.

Rose gladly accepted the offer of Sir Edwin, who further promised to him that, if Tom outlived him, he should keep the lodge during his life, as it was a situation suited to his state of blindness. On that subject, however, Mary Rose's information, that a surgeon had declared the practicability of restoring the child's sight, induced me to think further upon it ; and, the fifth year after his mother's death, I shewed him to an eminent oculist, who declared, that the eye had received no injury but what couching would remove. The time for the operation was fixed, and it was, as you must all recollect, performed about seven months since, when Mrs. Caudle, with great humanity, offered her services to attend and take care of Tom on the occasion, and received Roger's permission to do so.

How long Phebe will continue to comfort her father, I cannot exactly say, but I rather think, little girls, that you must consider the pretty work-baskets as farewell marks of her gratitude to our family ; for, as soon as Tom is quite familiar with the use of his eyes, she is to be married to a son of one of your papa's tenants, who requires an industrious and notable wife.

Sir Edwin has planted an acre with willows for the use of Rose's trade : and Phebe, and her father, will teach Tom to make baskets, and they expect him, in another year or two, to be an expert little workman. For Rose himself, he is the happiest of creatures ; and feels, after his long separation from his native land and children, as a mariner does after toilsome exertion in a tempest, when the winds abate, and the sun breaks forth with those cheering marks of serenity which dispel all apprehensions of a return of the storm.

Here Mrs. Eleanor ended her narration, and the children began to plan what present they should make Phebe when she married. Mrs. Pontin proposed, that each should follow her

own fancy in the affair, and in this Mrs. Eleanor promised to acquiesce.

MISS SPICER.

I think, aunt Eleanor, to make Miss Rose's wedding complete, my uncle should give her away, and my cousins should act as bride-maids.

MRS. ELEANOR.

Were you serious, which I am sure you are not, and merely mean a sarcasm, you would think very wrong, Gertrude. You suppose your uncle and I disgraced by the notice we have thought proper to take of Phebe Rose: I must, however, tell you, that neither of us design to pay Phebe any attentions inconsistent with her decided humble lot in life. Yet, had Providence seen fit to have raised her to a more elevated situation, I do not think she would have disgraced it; and, for my own part, I should feel far greater satisfaction in her society, as she now is, than in that of a woman of high birth and shining accomplishments, who should be destitute of Phebe Rose's sterl-

ing good sense, good temper, and genuine humility of character.

MISS SPICER.

Indeed, aunt! I should imagine that a low born person like Phebe Rose, though ever so good, must always be wretched company for genteel people: such a person as she is may be vastly well in her native rank, but she should never, with my consent, stir beyond it.

MRS. ELEANOR.

Upon my word, Gertrude, your ideas are in perfect unison with Eastern despotism; and you have the honour to think as the ancient Egyptians did, though I suspect you have not the regard they had for the inferior classes,—your pride would keep stationary. May you, however, learn to think and feel as becomes a Christian, living under the best and most liberal government in the world, and to believe that “none are born with base impediments to rise;” for, be assured superior virtue, sense, and perseverance, will surmount almost every disadvantage of birth and education; and, an individual who has these, will be enabled to meet

affluence with a steady dignity of mind, which must command the respect of every one desirous of supporting merit. For my own part, were I not to bestow a marked attention on such a character when it fell in my way, I should think I was refusing to co-operate with the will of Heaven, and should deserve even more than the censure of the wise and good.

MISS SPICER.

Oh! I dare say, aunt, you understand what is right, and good, and proper, and all that, much better than we do; but, I am sure it would not be pleasant, nor should I chuse to sit down to dinner with such a being as Phebe Rose, for the vulgar must be vulgar although they possess the gold of every mine in the earth.

MRS. ELEANOR.

So far, Gertrude, you are right, mere riches certainly can neither conceal nor remove vulgarity; and, unless used and directed by a superior and a good mind, they would only render it more disgusting and offensive by making it more visible. Where, however, both the head and

heart of an individual are right, wealth is a blessing to him; and, whether he be born a lord or a peasant, it gives in his hands the impression of happiness and virtue to every thing. But, Gertrude, you have unbounded prejudices to surmount, and a sad contraction of spirit to rectify.

At this moment they heard the sound of a carriage, and Mrs. Eleanor rose to meet her expected evening visitors, leaving the school-room, as she ever did, to the great regret of her nieces; and taking the Misses Spicer with her, because she thought it full time that these young ladies should learn to bear the mild restraint of private society; knowing, also, that the little Winters were much happier without their company, for the Misses Spicer would neither play with them nor amuse each other, but would sit with a perpetual sneer and supercilious air of dissatisfaction at all they heard or saw, and, almost at regular intervals, would sigh and express aloud their impatience for the return of their mother from Stowel races. The evening was too damp for the children to go into the garden; they, therefore, exercised

themselves in walking, dancing, and skipping, as they were disposed, in the upper gallery, their usual promenade in unfavourable weather.

The visitors at the castle this evening were a neighbouring gentleman of the name of Smith, and his wife, with their daughter; a family for whom Sir Edwin and his sister felt a particular esteem. The countenance of Mrs. Smith happened to please the capricious fancy of the Misses Spicer, whose features, in some degree, relaxed from the air of dissatisfaction they had exhibited since their sojourn at the castle. The sisters listened with complacency to the conversation of the company, and, with unusual attention, addressed themselves to Miss Smith. "As we are countrywomen, Miss Smith, we must be friends." "I shall be happy to be friends with you, ladies; but I believe you mistake my country." "Oh! no, by no means," rejoined Miss Julia Spicer; "I am an Indian, and so are you, for we were born in Jamaica." "And I, in Calcutta;" observed Miss Smith. "Yes," said Miss Spicer, "that is what Julia means; Calcutta is

in India, and surely so is Jamaica;* so we must be countrywomen and friends, of course."

Miss Smith immediately perceived that her new acquaintance had mistaken their geography a little, and, notwithstanding a rising surprise at such a want of knowledge in girls, so much older than herself, she refrained from any explanation which might put them to shame; and merely observed, that, however the matter was, she hoped they might be friends as well as neighbours.

The Misses Spicer, perfectly unconscious of the ignorance they had betrayed, felt a little piqued that Miss Smith did not admit with greater warmth of manner, the important reasons assigned by them for a sudden friendship. However, on the whole, the evening passed off lightly, and the sisters were in better humour than on any preceding one that they had spent at the Castle.

On taking leave, Mrs. Smith requested Mrs. Eleanor would bring her nieces with her to Beech Grove; observing, that their society must be a great acquisition to her little Ja-

* Such a trait must be credited.

mima, who would, doubtless, improve from it. Erroneous as Mrs. Smith's conjecture on this head was, the Misses Spicer felt it not, but were soothed by the compliment; and, on retiring to rest, did nothing but utter the most extravagant expressions of delight at their new friends. Mrs. Smith was a divine creature—a sweet soul—in short, a *nice* woman; and they agreed to ask their aunt Eleanor to take them over to Beech Grove, the first fine evening, and, in due time, give proof how justly deserving they were of the polite attention shewn them by Mrs. Smith.

The next afternoon Mrs. Eleanor entered the school-room earlier than usual, and found the Misses Spicer in high panygeric of Mrs. Smith and her daughter; and telling the little Winters, with exultation, what a blissful evening they had spent. The satisfaction they expressed had raised the spirits of their cousins, and all joyously obeyed the summons of their aunt Eleanor, to walk. As the shade of the favourite oak was considered too damp after the showers of the preceding day, it was agreed that they should walk to the octagon seat in the park, about three quarters of a mile

distant, in which they would be guarded from the effects of the rain.

They had no sooner reached the spot than Mrs. Eleanor, according to the promise she had previously given the children, prepared to tell them another humble story; and, as the Misses Spicer seemed in a mood to be pleased, she was not without hope that they would listen, at least with patience, or at all events would forbear to shew their usual signs of impatience—sighs and beating their feet against the ground,

THE WOODMAN'S DAUGHTER.

MARY ALSOP, the daughter of a peasant, whose occupation was that of a woodman, shared the affections of her father and mother, in common with eight brothers and sisters, of whom she was the eldest. The cottage of John Alsop was truly that of content, and an object deserving a poet's description. It was situated on the summit of a gentle hill, and built of stone, with a thatched roof, which was always kept, as were also the windows, in

good repair. The front of the cottage was covered with roses and woodbines, which John delighted to keep neatly trained against the wall. Half an acre of garden, on the slope of the hill, laid out in the neatest manner imaginable, supplied the woodman's family with common vegetables, and an ample stock of sweet herbs always secured his children a savory and wholesome dish of broth; indeed, John Alsop could find a sprig in his little spot of ground, when the squire's gardener was unable to produce a leaf.

At the bottom of the garden ran a convenient and beautiful rivulet, beyond which was a range of rich meadows, terminated by a corresponding hill to that on which Alsop's cottage stood, and on whose summit appeared the ivy covered tower of Cobwell church. Alsop cultivated his garden at leisure hours, and took great pleasure in flowers: he had one bed of carnations, that was his chief pride, and from which he had gathered some of such superior beauty, that they had thrice gained him the prize at the annual Florists' feast.*

* An annual feast in many parts of the country, where prizes are given to those members who can produce the

A few yards from this favourite bed of carnations, was a larger one of the most useful sweet herbs, thyme, marjoram, rosemary, winter savory, sage, mint, &c. and near it stood a row of bee-hives, the industrious tenants of which were constantly, in their season of work, regaling on the profusion of aromatic blossoms within their reach; and their labour enabled Alsop to boast a cask of the finest mead, as a standing luxury on festive days. The other measures of his garden were two apple-trees, which constantly bore such fine fruit that it was always bespoke before the blossoms had fallen, or the crop could be with certainty estimated. These trees were a petty rental; and comprised, with the rustic apiary, and a certain quantity of fuel which was allowed him as woodman, all the emolument of John Alsop, independent of the earnings of his daily labour.

finest flower. On one year, the prize, which is a silver cup, or watch, &c. is awarded to the finest carnation; on another, to the finest tulip; on a third, perhaps, to him who raised the most beautiful auricula. Florist, is a corruption of Flora—the goddess of flowers, in heathen mythology.

The manner in which the woodman's family lived was a regular course of order and industry. While he worked in the extensive woods of Mr. Brake, his family at home, (with the exception of the younger children, who went daily to the dame's school in the village,) were employed in assisting their mother in the household business, or in knitting or sewing, as she required them. At twelve o'clock Mary Alsop used to carry her father's dinner to him in the wood, and on her return sit down with her mother and family to her own.

On wet days the woodman staid at home, and at intervals worked in his garden, or prepared his seeds, and instructed his daughter in reading and writing, for he knew how to do both; and Mary, never having been sent to school as the younger children were, must, without this attention, have remained ignorant of these most necessary acquirements. The woodman was, however, a conscientious father, and would not allow her to suffer through her superior usefulness, as the eldest child of the peasant too commonly does: for Mary, like other girls in her circumstances,

had been her mother's auxiliary, ever since the period of her first rocking the cradle to prolong the infant's nap ; for she had not arrived at strength to nurse.

The hours after church, on a Sunday, were devoted by the woodman to the instruction of all his children in the Holy Scriptures ; and those who were too young to comprehend his simple expositions of the practical lessons that he selected for their edification, were yet obliged to sit still ; by which habit they became disciplined to bear restraint on the Sabbath-day, and accustomed to listen with attention.

The woodman's happiness was, indeed, all centred in " that dear hut, his home," and well for him it was so ; for the regularity of his life, his known habits of piety, and constant attendance at Cobwell church, though at some distance from Alsop, shewed a 'zeal for religion, which exposed him to the derision of the scorners, who abounded in his own village, and procured for him the appellation of " Godly John." The woodman, however, discovered neither spleen nor petulance at this sarcastic distinction ; but, with a " meek and quiet spirit," steadily

pursued that course which he hoped would be approved by Heaven, and encouraged his children to do the same.

When Mary Alsop was fourteen years of age, her father thought it most advisable to get an easy service for her, in a respectable and regular family ; judging this a more suitable situation for a girl instructed and brought up in domestic employments under a good mother, than sending her abroad into the fields to earn her bread by day-labour. With this view, the woodman applied to Mrs. Glebe, the rector's wife, of Cobwell. This lady and her husband had frequently observed John Alsop, with his numerous and decently-habited family, amongst their congregation on the sabbath-day ; and, pleased with this mark of serious attention to their public duties, received the woodman's present application with benevolence, and readily undertook to interest herself in the disposal of Mary. It so happened that Mrs. Glebe wanted a young girl to assist in her nursery ; but she did not think proper to mention the circumstance, although she meditated to engage Mary, should she find her qualified to fill her vacant situation.

On the following day, Mary waited upon Mrs. Glebe, who was so pleased with her modest manner, and the collected and rational replies she made to the several questions proposed to her, that she engaged her service without hesitation, and appointed her to come almost immediately to the Parsonage. Accordingly, three days afterwards, Mary entered the family of Mrs. Glebe, fraught with good instructions from her father and mother, and confirmed in the habits of industry and frugality.

As Mary is the humble heroine of a little history, you will, doubtless, expect a description of her person, as a preliminary to it; which, though brief, shall be given in due form. Mary Alsop, then, was no beauty; a well-proportioned, neat figure, with a florid, healthy countenance expressive of sense, reflection, and good-nature, were all her pretensions to personal attractions; and the subsequent good fortune which befel her shews, that virtue and superior sense will sometimes be eminently distinguished and rewarded in this present life, although unaided by any of those powerful auxiliaries,—beauty, riches, or accomplishments.

Mary had lived three years with Mrs. Glebe, beloved by her whole family, and without a wish, or even an idea, of a superior situation, when she was one day summoned, without any previous intimation, to attend her mistress in the parlour. Mary obeyed the command with some emotion, arising from a natural perplexity as to the cause which could occasion it.

Mrs. Glebe perceived the state of her mind, and proceeded to dissipate her apprehensions by desiring her to sit down, and then addressed her in the kindest accents to the following effect. “Mary, I have observed with increasing satisfaction your good behaviour and correct conduct, and shall have real pleasure in rewarding them. I promised your worthy father, when I took you into my service, that, if you improved in qualifications, and conducted yourself as well as your good sense and good manners promised, that I should exert my interest to advance you in the rank of service. The opportunity now presents itself for me to fulfil my promise; and, in doing this, I shall lose you sooner than I expected: however, as you are in a capacity to avail yourself of promotion, my convenience shall be no obstruction to it.

My friend Mrs. Plomer has written to me, requesting that I would endeavour to find out a proper servant to attend her two eldest daughters, well educated young women, with whom I think you will be very happy : for I am persuaded you will receive kind treatment, and ample wages. I expect, indeed, that a certain degree of regret will hang about you for a season ; and that, like a transplanted shrub, you will droop on feeling the influence of a new soil : this, however, will be but temporary, and, like the shrub, you will soon become invigorated by your change of situation. I too, Mary, shall feel regret, since I must experience a sensible privation in your departure ; and it may be a considerable length of time before your place is filled, and your loss supplied to my family."

Here Mary could not restrain the emotions of her heart ; but, rising in a flood of tears, approached Mrs. Glebe, sobbing expressions of gratitude for the kindness she had received, and declaring that she felt no desire beyond that of living and dying in her service. " Your sensibility," observed Mrs. Glebe, " is highly natural ; and, however my own feelings may be in

unison with it, I should be unpardonable in allowing my mind to be diverted from a right intention. We must mutually suppress our regrets, otherwise we shall be guilty of that instinctive weakness, which, excluding the dictates of reason, would render us slaves to the gratification of the present moment, to the great injury of our future and superior interests. Had I, Mary, a situation in my family suitable to your present qualifications, and could afford to remunerate them fairly, I should think myself fully at liberty to keep you in my service; but, as my establishment does not allow the former, or my fortune the latter, I should be guilty of a species of robbery were I to detain you, and thus neglect the relative duty to my neighbour: and you, Mary, in declining to follow promotion, when it solicits you honourably, would be defeating the apparently gracious design of Providence in your favor, and guilty at the same time of a breach of duty to yourself, which involves that you owe your family."

Here Mrs. Glebe ceased to speak; and Mary felt and acquiesced in the justness of her reasoning, though she could not restrain her tears;

for these on many occasions will flow, notwithstanding the obedience of the will to the dictates of reason, and the resignation of it to the appointments of Providence. She then dismissed her ; and Mary quitted her mistress, absorbed with the one idea that she was about to quit the Parsonage, long become a second home to her.

A few days after this conversation, it was settled that Mary should proceed to her new situation with Mrs. Plomer : but, before her departure, Mrs. Glebe permitted her to spend a day or two with her friend. It is easy to imagine the manner in which this farewell visit was passed amidst a Christian family, whose kindred links derived their greatest strength from the very circumstance of its being so. The parting between these tender relatives was natural and affecting. The parents considered Mary as removing from their influence at a time when her sphere of action was about to be enlarged, and their tender solicitude for their child's continuance in the paths of rectitude pictured to their imaginations her future duties, as more arduous than there was just reason to suppose them. They pressed their

pious exhortations and injunctions on her willing ear, and felt as if the duty of instruction, though in reality never omitted, had been neglected until the hour of separation. Mary was all humility, and promised her parents to pray constantly for that aid from above, which she knew could alone be an effectual security for the execution of her best purposes. She in return addressed herself to her brothers and sisters, and recommended to them that order and obedience towards their parents that she had endeavoured to practice, and which she felt was the cause of her own happiness : and promised always to keep their interest in her view, and that she would not fail to assist them whenever it might be in her power.

When the time arrived in the evening for Mary to return to the Parsonage, they all arose to accompany her,—Jowler, the faithful sentinel of their wicket-gate, not excepted ; but Giles, the second brother, retarded their departure by addressing her, and observing that he should like to have some tokens to remember her leaving home, and then proposed to fetch down-stairs, what would answer the purpose, six fine acorns from the largest oak

in Squire Brake's wood, and as many double walnuts of a particularly fine sort, and to put them in the garden.

Mary approved of Giles's proposal, upon which he brought his valued stock, and proceeded with his family to a spot in the garden pointed out by the woodman as best suited for the intended nursery. Mary put the first acorn into the ground, and her brothers and sisters, according to their ages, followed her example, each burying an acorn and a walnut alternately, until the whole were disposed in a row. "You will all watch the progress of these seeds, and think of me," said Mary; "and I expect you, Giles, to nurse mine and your own too. It may be a long time before we meet again; and, perhaps, when next we stand on this spot, you may be almost a man, and become a good gardener;"—for it occurred to her that the fondness which Giles inherited from his father for plants and gardening, gave indication of the occupation he would afterwards follow.

This little ceremony ended, Mary embraced them all, and they proceeded to the Parsonage at Cobwell, and took their last farewell, after

a final embrace, as she closed the gate opening into a winding shrubbery, which at once concealed her from their weeping eyes.

The following morning, Mary Alsop proceeded by the stage to Mrs. Plomer's house, which was upwards of a hundred miles distant from Cobwell: there she was received as a young person already credited for the qualities of a meritorious servant. She at once perceived herself destined to serve a family who moved in another sphere of life from that she had quitted. Mrs. Glebe's house was characterized by that neatness and compactness which generally mark well-managed confidence; Mrs. Plomer's, by the space and elegance resulting from affluence and taste. Mary saw the difference, and felt the regretted Parsonage as the most agreeable to her humble views, and best suited, as she conceived, to her moderate talents. Diffident, however, as she was of the latter, she betrayed none of that awkward confusion often shewn by people of little minds when they see objects more splendid than those to which they have been accustomed. She possessed a sound intellect, and would have been equally mistress of herself in the Castle with

its gilded doom, sculptured ornaments, and costly furniture, as in her father's cottage, with its roof of thatch and simple rustic furniture for the mere purposes of use.

The real worth of Mary continued to be justly appreciated. Exact in the performance of her own particular duty, she was kind and obliging to all; and, whilst the arbitress of petty disagreements amongst the domestics, was beloved and esteemed as the peace-maker in Mrs. Plomer's hall. She became, as she deserved to be, a general favourite; whilst her late mistress enjoyed, in her growing prosperity, that genuine satisfaction, which invariably springs in virtuous minds from a consciousness of having acted in a just and disinterested manner; and the woodman and his wife were daily thankful to God for a daughter, who was an example to their other children, and who promised to be a comfort to their age.

Two years after Mary Alsop had been with Mrs. Plomer, the eldest of the Misses Plomer was married to a Mr. Phipps, a gentleman from Bengal, of good fortune, but who proposed returning with her to India. Mary had, from the

first introduction into Mrs. Plomer's family, conceived a partiality to this young lady, who had engaged and confirmed it by particular notice and kindness, and who now solicited her to attend her abroad; to which she readily agreed, provided her so doing met with the approbation of her parents, of Mrs. Glebe, and Mrs. Plomer. This general consent was duly asked, and promptly given.

Mary then wrote an affectionate and dutiful farewell to her father and mother, of whom she judged it discreet to avoid taking a personal leave; and, at the same time, sent them fifteen guineas, the total amount of her savings during five years' servitude. She was enabled to do this, since every thing necessary for the voyage was provided by Mrs. Phipps; and her proper sense of duty rejected the idea of appropriating these few guineas to the purchase of baubles or finery, which so many young women, in her station, are anxious to possess, and which so few would have denied themselves; when, she reflected, to how very many useful purposes her good mother would apply them in her large family.

Mrs. Plomer was sensible that Mary would

be a great loss to her; but, she considered, that the period of separation from her daughter was not a proper moment to consult her own personal feelings of domestic convenience; and, persuaded she would be an acquisition and comfort to Mrs. Phipps, she resigned her most willingly to her use and wishes.

Mary Alsop left England in the 20th year of her age, and arrived in Calcutta a few days before she completed it. A new scene now presented itself to her; she had been an upper servant, indeed, in England, where she was treated with indulgence, and where she might have lived luxuriously, had she pleased: yet Mary's had been by no means an indolent life; far otherwise; and her occupation with her needle had been so constant, as to leave little leisure for that mental improvement of which she was desirous. During the voyage, however, there was little occasion for work, and Mary employed the considerable intervals of leisure which now fell to her lot, in the perusal of several good authors, an occupation which can never be a negative one to minds anxious for the acquirement of knowledge.

In India, she soon felt a further material

change in her situation : for there, the European domestics can scarcely be considered servants, since they are supported rather as objects of state, or confidence, than as menial dependants, every kind of want being supplied, and labor performed, by the native people. Mary was herself attended, and lived more as the companion and friend of Mrs. Phipps than as her servant. In truth, the disparity that subsisted between them on their first meeting, gradually disappeared, and realized the words of the son of Sirach, "Wisdom lifteth up the head of him that is of low degree, and maketh him to sit among great men." Mary, who had risen progressively to this elevation, did not long remain stationary, but soon attracted the attention of a guest and friend of Mr. Phipps ; and he, at length, solicited her hand in marriage. The character of Mr. Smith, (for that was the name of Mary's admirer,) was such as to promise every reasonable happiness in the wedded state. He was a plain, yet gentlemanlike man, with a good understanding and sound moral principles, derived from that holy source which alone could render them so. Indeed, had he been deficient in these first essen-

tials of character, Mary would utterly have rejected a union with him, flattering as it might have seemed to her temporal views. No impediment, however, existing against her marriage, it took place, with the entire approbation of her friends, six months after her arrival in India, when she became mistress of a handsome house of her own, with an equipage, and that ample retinue of attendants common to the civil servants of the Hon. East India Company, of a certain rank and standing in the service. Henceforth, Mrs. Phipps and Mrs. Smith were to move in the same sphere; but both, from good sense and proper feelings, and equally above the meanness of envy or jealousy, so justly understood the proprieties of life, that the original and subordinate state of Mrs. Smith was no obstruction to their constant and cordial association; and the manners of the latter, which she had imbibed from the amiable models that had been successively before her, were so chaste and pleasing, that, had the fact been unknown, it could never have been guessed, that she was born and bred in a woodman's cottage, and lived a servant under different circumstances until the period of her

marriage; so competent, my dear little girls, are perior sense, sound principles, and sweetness of temper, to raise a young person above the circumstances of obscurity of birth, and inferiority of station, and to efface, even during the season of youth, every trace of early rusticity. But I cannot conclude my story to-night, because the evening closes : however, you are interested in the sequel ; and, if nothing intervene to prevent our meeting to-morrow, you shall hear it. The party then arose, and were soon at the castle.

The next evening, in the same place, Mrs. Eleanor resumed her story of the Woodman's daughter.

Mrs. Smith, in her prosperity, was not unmindful of the wants of others ; and her parents, to whom under God she considered herself indebted for every thing, were the first objects of her solicitude. To these she allowed a early stipend, proportioned to their situation and necessities ; and also provided for the suitable education of her brothers and sisters, all of whom Mr. Smith intended to place out to creditable trades, as their wishes inclined, and

in which they might afterwards advance themselves, if properly assiduous.

Mrs. Smith continued to reside in India for twelve years, and became the mother of several children, whom she kept under her own eye. At the termination of that period, Mr. Smith's fortune was sufficiently ample for his moderate wishes; and he resolved to return to England, and attend the education of his children,—a most important task, which he had observed too often badly executed when left to mere agents. He then quitted India with his family, after a sojourn in it of five-and-twenty years.

It was on the return of Mr. Smith, that the character of his wife was fully developed. On their first arrival, they stayed some days in London to meet Mrs. Plomer, who came up to receive, from Mrs. Smith, her three little grandchildren. After resigning these precious charges to her former mistress, this amiable woman proceeded with her family to the cottage of her parents, having previously announced to them her arrival and probable visit at a particular time.

No earthly happiness could be more perfect than that which pervaded the woodman's cot-

tage on the return of his daughter Mary, who, on her part, found her parents little changed. Rest from severe labour, with voluntary employment suited to their age and strength; and minds relieved from cankering care, and at uninterrupted liberty to serve God (that first of Christian privileges to declining age), were circumstances which had checked the progress of those furrows which are too commonly observable on the countenance of the labourer, before time has numbered his years, much beyond half the allotted age of man.

Fanny Alsop, who succeeded Mrs. Smith at the worthy rector's, at Cobwell, was the wife of an honest miller, and the happy mother of a healthy little family. Giles, who was now grown a young man, introduced himself with an ingenuous and pleasant air, by reminding his sister of his tokens, which he boasted to have nursed to a flourishing plantation. To see Mrs. Smith walking about her native village, accompanied by her whole family, whose pure delight seemed to demand the sympathy and congratulation of every lover of virtue, was a picture truly representing the victory

of dignity of character over that pride and false shame so often to be observed in the world amongst the highly favoured of Providence in temporal things, when once success has greatly raised them above their father's house. Such persons, influenced by vanity, will sometimes indeed affect an ostentatious condescension to those they have left behind them in the vale of obscurity or adversity, which is even more oppressive than coldness or absolute neglect. But Mrs. Smith recognized with genuine affability, the result of a Christian spirit, all who had formerly shewed her kindness; and, as these were the same who knew how to appreciate the real worth of "Godly John," she did not fail to leave them little marks of her gratitude.

In this manner Mrs. Smith gave her daughter the first lesson on humility, and thus the child learnt practically that real virtue gives dignity to the humblest lot in life, and that intrinsic merit is not to be obscured by a thatched roof or a simple garb. At the same time she did every thing liberal and consistent to her father's family; though not being

ashamed of the condition of her kindred, she was too wise to attempt raising them at once to her own level; this she considered must be a work of progression, and the result of exemplary conduct or unusual success in the different lines in which they might be placed in life. To her brother and sister, whose destiny was decided as to the course they should follow, she gave a hundred pounds each, to animate their industry; and thus laid the foundation, perhaps, of future competency: the younger ones, being yet unprovided for, she disposed in different ways, according to her judgment. Giles aspired to be a nurseryman; and Ralph, her youngest brother, panted to be a soldier, and wished, above every thing, to seek honour in the field, and the "bubble Reputation, even in the cannon's mouth." Mr. Smith, observing this, sent him a cadet to Bengal, where he promises to become an ornament to his profession: his two youngest sisters were apprenticed to a good school, in order to qualify them for governesses; and thus, in due time, to provide for themselves.

Some people may think she ought to have

taken her sisters home to her, and provided for them as children of her immediate family ; and, doubtless, there are many who would have done so, though I question if the motive of their different conduct would have been half so good as that which actuated Mrs. Smith. This lady considered that she had no right to burthen her husband's purse with the support of her sisters, as girls of independent fortune ; and she would have been far more ashamed of having them idle appendages of this appearance in her house, than that all the world should know for what they were intended.

Mr. Smith was a liberal man, as well as a kind husband ; and Mrs. Smith, independent of her gratitude and affection for him, felt that, in return for his confidence in her, she should be a faithful guardian of her property. Justice accordingly regulated all her liberalities to her own family, and checked every lurking feeling of pride or instinctive partiality which, if encouraged, would have tended to warp it. On the same principle, she made no attempt to gentlemanize her father, but secured to him such an allowance as to render him easy for the remainder of his life, in that

line, which age and custom had endeared to him, and for which his good sense well knew he was only fitted.

Mr. Smith having had the discernment to chuse Mary Alsop for his wife, was naturally disposed to esteem her parents, and soon felt so cordial a respect for them, that he purchased an estate within twenty miles of their picturesque cottage; occasionally visited them; and always made a point of receiving at his house, at Christmas, as many of their immediate family as could be collected together. The woodman, at this cheerful season, surrounded by his kindred, had the air of a Patriarch, and enjoyed from it as much regard and respect as any one ever did. This worthy man is still alive, and has annually the gratification of seeing his family changing its position from the humble sphere of the peasant, to the higher one of the gentry, and rising progressively, but rapidly, to wealth and honour.

I must not omit to add, that, as soon as Mrs. Smith took possession of her country residence, Giles made a point of conveying safely to it his "Tokens;" and the oaks and walnut-trees, of precious stock, made their appearance

one morning across the shoulders of a peasant, escorted by Giles, who insisted on setting them himself; observing, that their transplantation might now be a "token to mark his departure."

Mrs. Smith, having attended him while he did so, had them afterwards guarded with peculiar care and nicety, by high fencing; and she could not help reflecting, with great thankfulness, how emblematical they were of the flourishing state of her father's family. She valued them as precious mementoes, and indulged the hope that they would long remain tenants of the soil, and shelter under their branches generations yet unborn. The woodman's daughter has long been the head of her father's house, and is respected and beloved by all who know her.

Here Mrs. Eleanor finished her recital, and promised her nieces, that, on some future occasion, she would relate to them a story, which in every circumstance should be a direct contrast to the one they had heard; and the heroine of it a lady who had started in life, with all the advantages of birth, beauty, fortune, and education.

MISS SPICER.

We certainly shall be happy to hear it, aunt, though I do not expect it will be more interesting than the woodman's daughter. I declare I begin to be amused with stories, and yet that is silly too; for after all, they have no foundation, but in the imaginations of clever people, like you, my good aunt; for I must allow, that you are very, very clever.

MRS. ELEANOR.

Indeed, Gertrude, you allow too much, since I do not merit to be classed amongst the very, very clever; and for the stories I relate, assure yourself they are not the production of my imagination, but all sketches from real life; and I have no further merit than in adding those touches requisite to give effect to objects that are to be viewed closely. You are, however, wrong, Gertrude, to suppose it silly to be amused with stories, unless indeed the subject or manner of them be so. The wisest men have chosen to convey the most important truths in the form of stories, which are sometimes simple narration, with the sense clear throughout;

while at other times it is disguised in similitude, as in allegory, fable, or parable. The sacred writers both of the Old and New Testament, frequently used stories in the form of parables; a wise method, you may be certain, because it was sanctioned by our blessed Saviour himself, who constantly employed this mode of instruction with his disciples.

MISS WINTER.

Was not Dives and Lazarus, aunt, a parable?

MRS. ELEANOR.

It was, my dear, and a most impressive one; and is calculated beyond any other, considering the authority of it, to bring the present and future so awfully to our feelings, as to convince us they are closely connected.

MISS SPICER.

As to the persons you speak of, aunt, we know nothing about *them*; and, as for the future, we care little for it: present time, as I have heard dear aunt Spicer say a thousand times, is every thing. But the woodman's daughter is certainly pretty enough for a quiet story,

though I can never be persuaded that Mary Alsop, more than Phebe Rose, could with propriety become the wife of a nabob ; and, if a gentleman were so very strange as to marry such a wife, notwithstanding her sober goodness, she must always look as if carrying a bundle of wood.

MRS. PONTIN.

I am afraid, Miss Spicer, that some of your West-Indian acquaintance would fall in your estimation, were you to trace their origin in life, and progress to fortune : and you would, I think, too certainly discover that there are amongst them some whose present wealth and splendour have not been so immediately the consequence of a virtuous conduct, as in the case of the woodman's daughter.

MISS SPICER.

Oh ! no, Mrs. Pontin ; that I am sure is *false* ; papa and mamma keep company only with really genteel and fashionable people. They detest, absolutely detest, low born creatures, and, I can assure you, are acquainted with none who are so ; were they, I could easily discover them.

MRS. PONTIN.

Miss Spicer, it will be necessary for you to attach less importance to external appearance, before you will be able to distinguish clearly the character it covers, and at present so effectually conceals from your observation. But see there a group of children advancing towards us.

ANNA.

Oh! yes, so there is: look, sisters; look, cousins, they are getting over the stile: one, two, three, four, five, six, in all; they have baskets on their arms; I wonder where they have been?

ELLEN.

Don't you know, Anna? they are some of our aunt's orphan school, and I guess have been picking wood-strawberries: we will ask them.

MISS SPICER.

Who do you say those odd creatures are, with their blue gowns, close caps, and white tippets, looking so primitive? Oh! I dare say they are a select number of rustic damsels, train-

ing under our good aunt Eleanor, in order to follow her sage example, and become old maids.

LOUISA.

Fie! cousin Gertrude; how can you talk so disrespectfully of our dear aunt, who is so kind to us, and so good to every body! Those little girls are six of twelve orphans educated at my aunt's expense in the village.

MRS. ELEANOR.

And I hope will grow up virtuous and industrious members of society. These probably are some of the best of my protégées; and therefore, I suppose, they have a holiday.

LOUISA.

They are taught, Gertrude, to read, write, and cypher, and can do all as well as we can.

MISS SPICER.

As well as you, child; so much the worse: it is a very silly plan, indeed,—begging your pardon, aunt Eleanor. It is quite enough, I should think, for poor people to learn to spin,

do as they are bid, go to church once a-week, and curtsy when they meet their superiors; but, as to teaching them to read and write,—as my papa says, and dear aunt Spicer too, and they are both reckoned very sensible,—it is downright nonsense.

JULIA SPICER.

I agree with you, Gertrude; and I am determined, when I am married and my own mistress, that none of the servants in my house shall have these *accomplishments*, for they will be much better without them.

MRS. ELEANOR.

In this, as in other respects, you labour under great prejudice, which, however, you will soon be ashamed to declare, since you see the universal pains now taken in our blessed island to give the lowest persons in the community the advantage of instruction. The best things *may* be abused, and so may education; but this affords no argument against the general utility of it.

MISS SPICER.

People think differently; aunt.—But, bless

me ! cousins ; I should monstrously like to see you when you are of my age : I dare say you will be the most hideous, old-fashioned little mortals that ever were seen, from always living with people of such queer ways and notions.

EMMA.

Then you think, papa, aunt, and Mrs. Pontin, queer, I suppose ; but why do you think them so, cousin : I wish you would tell us what you mean by “ queer ways and notions ?”

MISS SPICER.

Indeed, Ellen, I don't mean that either my uncle, aunt, or Mrs. Pontin, are queer.

ANNA.

Now I do declare, Gertrude, you put me in mind of the picture of grandmamma and the cat.

MRS. PONTIN.

Very just, Anna ; and it is really fair to press Miss Spicer for the reason of her observation. Pray, Miss Spicer, gratify our curiosity, and say why you think us such queer people at the Castle ?

MRS. ELEANOR.

I must also join in Mrs. Pontin's request, which I do from two motives; first, because I like to accustom young people to give the reasons of their opinions; and secondly, because I would prevent our little girls from speaking at random, and contracting the habit of uttering illiberal observations. Now, Gertrude, for your reasons why you think us so "queer in our ways and notions." I begin to suspect "Tenterton steeple is the cause of the Goodwin Sands."

MISS SPICER.

And pray, aunt, may I just ask, first, what you mean by that last expression?

MRS. ELEANOR.

This saying or proverb is used, Gertrude, when an absurd reason, or rather no reason, can be given for any thing; the origin of which may be found in a sermon by Bishop Latimer, who, amongst very many other curious circumstances appositely introduced in his discourses, relates the following story: "Mr. Moore was once sent with commission into Kent, to try out, if it might be, what was the cause of the Goodwin Sands, and the shelf which

stopped up Sandwich haven. Thither cometh Mr. Moore, and calleth all the country before him, such as were thought to be men of experience, and men that could, of all likelihood, best satisfy him of the matter concerning the stopping of Sandwich haven. Amongst the rest came in before him an old man with a white head, and one that was thought to be little less than a hundred years old. When Mr. Moore saw this aged man, he thought it expedient to hear him say his mind in this matter, (for being so old a man, it was likely that he knew the most in that presence or company,) so Mr. Moore called this old man unto him, and said, ‘Father,’ said he, ‘tell me, if you can, what is the cause of the great arising of the sands and shelves hereabouts this haven, which stop it up so that no ships can arrive here. You are the oldest man I can espy in all the company, so that, if any man can tell any cause of it, you, of all likelihood, can say most to it, or at leastwise, more than any man here assembled.’—‘Yea, forsooth, good Mr. Moore!’ quoth this old man; ‘for I am well nigh a hundred years old, and no man here in this company any thing near my age.’

—‘ Well then,’ quoth Mr. Moore, ‘ how say you to this matter? What think you to be the cause of these shelves, and sands, which stop up Sandwich haven?’—‘ Forsooth, sir,’ quoth he, ‘ I am an old man,—I think Tenterton-steeple is the cause of the Goodwin sands: for I am an old man, sir,’ quoth he; ‘ I may remember the building of Tenterton-steeple, and I may remember when there was no steeple at all there; and, before that Tenterton-steeple, or Totterdown-steeple, was in building, there was no manner of talking of any flats or sands that stopped up the haven; and, therefore, I think that Tenterton-steeple is the cause of the decay and destroying of Sandwich haven.’ ”

Latimer was a prelate of strong sense and great piety, and preached before kings with Apostolic boldness. The sermon from which I have recited Tenterton-steeple was preached before King Edward the Sixth in 1550.

MISS SPICER.

Thank you for your story, aunt, in its old fashioned dress: but, indeed, I cannot possibly engage to give you a reason for all I say; and, I am sure, if I was forced to do so, I should be

amazingly cautious how I ever opened my lips ; and, if every body was the same, what a stupid set of hum-drum beings there must be : —why, aunt ; it would be a world of dummies.

MRS. PONTIN.

Well, Miss Spicer, I will endeavour to extricate you from your dilemma, and explain some of the reasons for your opinions of our queerness at the Castle. First, your uncle goes to church, and attends his prayers at home, watches his family, regards the condition of his neighbours, feeds the poor, instructs the ignorant, rewards the industrious, consoles the sick, exhorts the wicked, and thinks it his duty to endeavour to reclaim them ; occasionally indulges himself in field sports, visits the metropolis but seldom, and then never for the object of what is termed—pleasure. Then he dresses very queerly, neither like a farmer nor yet like a beau, but in such a decidedly queer style, as never to make it a question to what class in society he belongs, as far as this can be judged by outward appearance. Then your aunt commonly thinks with your uncle, and acts in the same queer spirit he does, creates

rational amusement for herself, at the same time that she carefully watches over the interests of her brother's family, and does the utmost good in her power to her fellow-creatures : then she dresses suitably to her age and the climate in which she lives, yet without a slavish regard to fashion : she neither affects, on the one hand, a puritanical plainness, nor, on the other, modish airiness or expensive elegance, and is careful to avoid every thing like singularity, in which she succeeds so well as to give every body capable of judging of the proprieties of dress, the impression of her being what in truth she is. All which is doubtless very queer ; and, for myself, as I dislike egotism, (that is, Anna, talking of oneself,) I shall only add, generally, that I must necessarily be very queer, having a high respect for individuals so queer. Thus, Miss Spicer, I have expressed in detail all your reasons.

MISS SPICER.

Indeed, ma'am, I did not think all you have said : in short, I meant nothing ; only I cannot help thinking some things queer.

MRS. PONTIN.

And this, merely, because the habits of this family vary from your own.—But here are the queer primitive little girls; let us hear what they have to say.

Mrs. Eleanor accosted the children, who, curtsying respectfully to the party, offered their baskets; and asked the eldest where they had been. “Our mistress, madam, gave us leave to go and pick wood strawberries, which we hope you will please to give the young ladies, except two baskets for our mistress.”—“That I will readily,” replied Mrs. Eleanor; “but you must not lose your little market, since it is the just reward of your good behaviour; and so tell me how you usually dispose of your strawberries.”—“We always carry them, madam, to dame Huxtor, who gives us sixpence a quart for them, and she sells them again to Dr. Classic’s young gentlemen, who buy a great deal of fruit at her house.”—“Very well,” said Mrs. Eleanor, “here then are three sixpences for three quarts, and the remainder you will dispose of as you please.” Mrs. Eleanor then divided the fruit amongst her party, and the flattered little orphans tripped gaily away with

the remainder of their gathering.—The Misses Spicer were well pleased to have the inquisitorial conversation on *queernesses* suspended, and returned tolerably well satisfied with their walk; the remainder of which, being occupied in eating strawberries, qualified that part of it that was becoming irksome.

On reaching the castle, Mrs. Eleanor found a servant of Mrs. Spicer's, who had been sent from Stowel to inquire after the young ladies and the family; and, to acquaint the former, that they must not expect their mother's return for another week; for, having caught a cold at the race ball, it had fallen on her lungs, and threatened a serious inflammation of them. This intelligence discomposed the Misses Spicer, who affirmed, that if their mamma had taken cold, which was a mere nothing, she ought to go home and nurse it. Mrs. Eleanor thought otherwise, and explained to her selfish, ungracious nieces, that her sister was more indisposed than they apprehended; and, although she hoped a few days care, with rest, and medicines, might remove all alarming symptoms, yet it was certain that hurry, exposure to the air, and fatigue of travelling, would increase

fever and inflammation, and put her life in imminent danger; she then took this opportunity of remarking on the fatal effects often known to arise from colds in this variable climate. Thus Mrs. Eleanor endeavoured to soften the impatience of her nieces, and, with the kindest expressions, sought to reconcile them to the necessity of remaining another week at the Castle; promising, at the same time, her best exertions to amuse them. Mrs. Eleanor well knew the principle of selfishness was too predominant in her nieces to make it probable that she should succeed in her attempt, by offering any other inducement than the gratification of it; and the necessity of the case made her, without hesitation, promise what she had every intention to perform. This succeeded in soothing the Misses Spicer, who joined the evening prayers with more than usual complacency: at their conclusion, they kissed their aunt and cousins, and retired to their bed-room, declaring and protesting, that aunt Eleanor was really a kind-hearted soul, and, if not so queer and old-maidish in some things, would be a *nicè* woman.

PART III.

THE following day being Sunday, Mrs. Eleanor could do nothing in pursuance of her promise to amuse her nieces, unless she had waved the appropriate duties of the Sabbath. The young ladies did not expect she would do this; and they, therefore, rose in the morning, lamenting what a dull day they had to pass, heartily wishing it an end, and supposing that they should be preached and prayed into a trance. Reflecting, however, upon their aunt's promise "to amuse them," and that Monday would soon come, they judged it better to keep her in good humour, and then discreetly determined to get through the "bore" of it as well as they could.

The Sabbath, when the busy world stands still, was ushered in by one of those calm, bright mornings, which are so well calculated

to inspire all nature with delight, and to raise the mind of favoured man to that attendance on his Maker, and contemplation of his goodness, which lead him to adoration and praise.

“The differing worlds’ agreeing sacrifice.”

The little Winters were engaged, until breakfast, in learning different catechisms suited to their respective ages, and afterwards prepared themselves for church, to which the Misses Spicer thought to avoid the penance of going, and, with this idea, they addressed their aunt.

MISS SPICER.

My dear aunt! as my uncle seems to intend going to church, and as I suppose you will not dream of walking, such hot weather, I am sure you will be dreadfully crowded in the carriage, and so we mean to stay at home, which, indeed, we had much rather do.

MRS. ELEANOR.

I am sorry to believe you would, Gertrude; but neither your uncle nor I could permit you to do so on any plea but one, and that you have not to offer; I mean that of sickness. The

Lord has commanded the Sabbath-day to be kept holy ; and your uncle and I are amongst those who resolve to obey the commandments, and to teach our children and household to do so also ; a part of the former you form at present, and are, consequently, of more importance than the mere “stranger within our gates.” You must, therefore, join us in the public duties of this day.

MISS SPICER.

If you and my uncle *insist* upon our going to church, of course we *must* go ; but we would much rather stay at home and practise. We need not, however, crowd you ; and, therefore, Julia and I will mount the dicky.

MRS. ELEANOR.

You will not crowd us, since the carriage will return for Mrs. Pontin and the children : but we would readily submit to a greater inconvenience than feeling crowded, rather than see any young females, in our family, in so masculine and indelicate a state of elevation, as seated on a dicky. But, my nieces ; I am really shocked at the coolness with which you

mention your design, "to practise" during the hours of divine service. Surely this cannot be your usual habit of passing that time?

MISS JULIA.

I declare then, aunt, it is; and, I cannot think, what harm in life there can be in a little innocent music. At home, we always fag away at our hardest passages on a Sunday, because we never know what better to do on that dull day; and, for the very self-same reason, papa and mamma always travel upon it, when from home on any excursion.

MRS. ELEANOR.

Your information really astonishes me: can it be possible that my sister has so entirely laid aside the habits of our father's house, as to neglect taking her children to church!

MISS SPICER.

Oh! yes, thank goodness; my dear aunt. Indeed, to tell you the truth, mamma hardly ever goes, except when the bishop preaches; and then, you know, it would be horridly unfashionable not to go to hear him. So mamma

takes the opportunity of his preaching to set a good example,—that is, she *did* so; but you must know, aunt, that the parish is in a queer way, for while Mr. Skippet preached, though several families went almost constantly to set a good example, hardly a soul followed it, except a very few, who were afraid to stay away for fear of offending their landlords; but, since Mr. Trueman has had the living, the church is so uncommonly crowded, that mamma thinks there is no further use in setting a good example, though she does go now and then to hear the bishop,—not because she likes to do so, she says, for he is too much in Mr. Trueman's style of preaching; but because it is the fashion to admire him, and mamma would not be singular you know. But I am sure my uncle will not be so strict as you, aunt. Now, do you, sir, (addressing herself to Sir Edwin,) think there is any harm in running over a few keys, in a little harmless music, in short, on a Sunday, more than upon any other day?

SIR EDWIN, (*putting down his book.*)

I have been listening to your conversation, and I am grieved to observe your ignorance and

indifference on the most momentous of all subjects—religion. Indeed, you appear to me to have lived in a Christian country, destitute of eyes or ears. You calmly ask, “Is there any harm in practising a little innocent music on a Sunday?” I answer, without demur, “Much harm in *practising*, because *this* is to you labour. On the contrary, as music has ever been felt to aid devotion, none in performing such music as is devotional, and may be advantageously blended with the worship of the day; but which, of course, should have been previously learnt perfectly.

MISS SPICER.

Pray, uncle, don't be so grave, for it seems as if you were angry with us. Well, Sir; if you please, Julia and I will stay at home and not practise, since you, as well as my aunt, think it wrong; but we will, like *good* girls, promise to read all the Psalms through, while you are at church.

SIR EDWIN.

Do not, my dear girls, propose more excuses; for, even though you were to perform your appropriate devotions, with real seriousness and

sincerity, I could not permit you to remain at home, for the reasons your aunt gave you ; and, in addition to which, I must tell you that the Scripture says, “The Lord loveth the gates of Sion better than the tents of Jacob ;” a declaration which clearly intimates that God prefers to be worshipped in public on the appointed day—the Sabbath, rather than in our houses ; where, with our families, it forms another part of our duty to adore and serve him ; which was not meant to supersede or interfere with the established ordinances of that holy day, which was hallowed by the Great Creator of heaven and earth Himself.

MISS SPICER.

Perhaps, uncle, if we were so clever, and understood about Religion and the Bible, as you do, we should think differently from what we now do. But, I declare *upon my honour*, I never heard any thing that was grave and serious to which I liked to listen, but dear Mr. Skippet’s Sermons: they are certainly *sweet* things ; and, once or twice, they were so pathetic, they really made Julia and me cry,—yes, really cry.

MRS. ELEANOR.

Do you recollect what *truths* in those Sermons drew your tears? Did Mr. Skippet, my dear, touch your feelings by describing the *fallen* state of man and his *ruined* condition by nature; and then raise your hopes and your gratitude by shewing you the great and tender mercy of God, in the appointed mode of recovering him from that sad state, by the sacrifice of a Saviour? Ah! no, my dears; I see no marks to denote that your emotion arose from a persuasion of these awful and affecting truths.

MISS SPICER.

Oh, no, aunt, certainly; Mr. Skippet used sometimes, so I have heard papa say, to preach very much in the way of Mr. Sterne's Sermons. But now I recollect, Mr. Trueman preaches something about the wickedness of every body, but I don't remember exactly what; however, that, aunt, could never make us cry; because, though we may be a little idle or so, now and then, I am sure we are not really wicked; since we never committed any sin.

SIR EDWIN.

That assertion alone, Gertrude, suffices to shew at once that you have been listening to a mere semblance of divinity, and that you have yet to learn the very first elements of it. These are presented you in the first book in the Bible, which shews you the corruption of human nature, and how it became so. However, these matters of indisputable fact you will, for the present, hear explained at church by Mr. Jones; and I hope you will not pain us with more frivolous excuses, but dismiss levity of spirit, and, with good manners and temper, join our family in the duties of this day. You will not hear the bishop preach, but an equally pious and good minister, whose discourses are sound in doctrine, simple in style, and delivered in so impressive a manner as almost to compel the attention of those who are least disposed to listen. Nay, Mr. Jones has, in several instances, had the gratification of knowing, that "Fools who came to scoff remained to pray." I beg, therefore, my nieces, that you will give your full attention at church, if not from the first motive which ought to influence your conduct, at least to please us.

Mr. Jones this day gives a funeral Sermon on the occasion of farmer Tomkin's death, one of my best tenants, who has been taken from his large family in a very distressing manner, being killed by a fall from his horse; and I expect we shall have a very full congregation.

MRS. ELEANOR.

I hope your uncle's words will not be thrown away upon you, Gertrude, and Julia; and, as the carriage will be round in half an hour, you may now go and get yourselves ready for church.

The Misses Spicer left the room, and Sir Edwin and his sister, after mutual expressions of sorrow for the state of their nieces, and apprehensions that they would be lost if not put into another course of education, rose to equip themselves for morning service.

The carriage being announced, the Misses Spicer appeared; they looked wistfully at the dicky, but merely observed that, had they known they should be forced to go to church, they would have brought their new bonnets and spencers, for that certainly they were unfit to

be seen. However, one consolation was, nobody would know them. Mrs. Eleanor expressed her entire satisfaction at their dress; which, she observed, was clean, neat, and genteel; and therefore far preferable to the *unusual elegance* many people thought necessary for church, but which, as it could not aid devotion, and generally raised a spirit injurious to it, she thought a custom to be discouraged in all young persons. The party were soon conveyed to the church, and were presently after joined by the rest of the family.

The church was full of people; and the general attention, joined to the stillness and seriousness in Sir Edwin's seat, with the venerable appearance and dignified manner of Mr. Jones, seemed, for a short time, to have awed the Misses Spicer into proper behaviour. But, no sooner was the text given out than they turned their eyes, where a general impulse appeared to have directed those of the congregation, viz. to farmer Tomkin's pew, when they caught the glimpse of a young female acquaintance; and, by a little further stretch of the neck, discovered her whole family in a seat, some way behind Sir Edwin's. From

this unfortunate diversion of their attention, all seriousness forsook them ; and they sat twisting, turning, and looking significantly at each other, until the Sermon was concluded, when they rose precipitately, and, forgetful of the common forms of propriety, attempted to quit the seat before the door of it was opened for them, in order to join their espied acquaintance. Sir Edwin checked their disregard of decorum, by a grave reproof, and gently commanded them to sit down, and not to leave the family.

The people waited respectfully in their seats until the Winter family quitted their's, when Sir Edwin shook hands with the widow Tomkins, and Mrs. Eleanor joined him in addressing words of kind consolation to her ; while the little Winters greeted the mourning orphans with the tenderest sympathy, and reluctantly resigned their hands, as their father and aunt took their leave of them. Sir Edwin having some calls to make in the village, his family returned home together, all commiserating, as "those who feel for others' woes," the heavy loss sustained by Mrs. Tomkins and her children.

Mrs. Eleanor inquired of Ellen if she understood the object of the sermon to which she appeared so laudably attentive ; and, if so, whether she liked it.

MISS WINTER.

Yes, aunt ; I hope I do : I think Mr. Jones meant to reconcile us to the loss of our friends on earth, by giving us hopes of meeting them again in the world to come.

MISS SPICER.

And do you now really think, aunt Winter, that we shall meet those we love again after death. If I were certain we should, I would actually read the Bible through, from beginning to end, until I got it by heart ; for dearly did I love brother Dick and my uncle Percy, and rejoiced should I be, to live with them for ever.

MRS. ELEANOR.

The Christian religion certainly gives us this most delightful hope ; may you, therefore, be determined on making yourself thoroughly acquainted with it, that your knowledge may serve, in the first instance, as a foundation for your belief, and, in the next, as the most pow-

erful argument for your practising the duties it enjoins. Your plan, however, of getting the Bible by heart, would fail of the object you propose by it, and you would be in the same predicament as that of the lady described by Dr. Watts, who, feeling a want of religion, imposed a task on herself similar to the one you propose. She proceeded far in it; but, finding no improvement, she mentioned the circumstance to Dr. Watts. That pious divine put her in the proper method of reading the Scriptures; and she then made progress in knowledge: piety accompanied it; and, by the aid of the Holy Spirit, she became an eminent Christian. May you, dear nieces, feel a like deficiency with this lady, and desire to be put into the right course to supply it: then will all, I trust, be well with you.

In this manner the family conversed until they arrived at the Castle. The children then repeated their catechisms; and were afterwards allowed, by Mrs. Pontin, to put questions on such points of them as they wished to have further explained,—an indulgence productive of infinite use, since it relieved the youthful mind from any doubts which remained upon it, and

thus checked, by times, the progress of scepticism.

It was Sir Edwin's custom to dine, on a Sunday, at an early hour, in order that his whole family might be enabled to attend the church. On this day, however, he appeared graver than usual ; and, a few minutes after the blessing was concluded, he addressed himself to his eldest niece, and after expressing how much he felt hurt at the improper behaviour of herself and sister during sermon time, he begged she would explain the reason that occasioned it, after the injunctions which closed their conversation at breakfast.

MISS SPICER.

Indeed, uncle, we were both disposed to listen to Mr. Jones' sermon, which seemed as if it would be pretty, for I remember it was something about meeting our friends again ; and, to tell you the truth, poor brother Dick and uncle Percy popped into my head at the moment, and I should have thought a good deal about them ; but, just after the text was delivered, and I was going to sit down snug and quiet in a corner of the seat, and think

about dear brother Dick and uncle Percy, who should I see, of all the people in the world, but Helen Fitzgerald, and presently after her father, mother, brother, and sister. I could not resist asking Mrs. Pontin what family they were with, and she whispered, "Sir Payne Oglevie's: but be silent and sit still;"—silent I was, but still I could not be, which, I am quite sure, sir, you will not wonder at, and, I am certain, will excuse, when I tell you the reason. You must know, uncle, that the Fitzgeralds are all strict papists; and judge my astonishment at seeing them at church. Now, sir, had you known this, do you think you could have listened to the finest sermon that ever the *finest* minister made; and don't you think it was shocking to see Papists in our church? We don't visit the Fitzgeralds, because they are Papists; for both papa and mamma hate them, and say they are the worst people on earth, except the Methodists. We meet Helen Fitz sometimes at the Lovelands; she and Clara Loveland are great friends; and I am sure I should like and admire her of all things if she were like us, a Protestant; for she is a mild, sweet girl, and never gives herself any kind of airs, which she certainly has

a right to do, because her father is *monstrous* rich, and she is very pretty indeed. But you know it would be dreadful to form a friendship with a Papist.

SIR EDWIN.

Wise and charitable reasons indeed you have given as an apology for your want of a decorous attention at church, Gertrude; cogent in your opinion, I will take for granted: but whence arises your bitter dislike to Roman Catholics,—Papists it is improper to call them; because, though it signifies no more than followers of the Pope, party malevolence has adopted that term, which is therefore offensive, and to be avoided.

MISS SPICER.

Why, sir, I hate Roman Catholics, because mamma, and papa, (and you know, sir, he is always reckoned a very sensible man,) hate them, and they say they always shall. Oh! yes; and Mr. Skippet constantly preached against them and the Methodists; so that, of course, they must be very bad: then he says they burn persons, and a great deal more that I forget;

only, in short, that they are certainly shockingly wicked people.

SIR EDWIN.

It is blind prejudice, not knowledge, which makes you so averse to Roman Catholics : and some other time, if you will give me your attention, I can say much to you on this subject, which I shall hope will lead you to judge with some discrimination. In the mean time, remember it is no mark of a Christian spirit to hate any body of people, because they have been taught a different creed, and to worship God in another manner from ourselves ; and I cannot omit to observe, that your favorite Mr. Skippet acts out of his proper character as a pastor, which includes that of a peace-maker, when, in the pulpit, he indulges himself in invectives against the various sects of Christians, in place of enforcing that warm charity so fervently recommended throughout the Gospel.

MISS SPICER.

Indeed, sir, you must not doubt Mr. Skippet's abilities, for he is a delightful man : but would you now, sir, for the world go into a

Roman-Catholic chapel ;—don't you think the Roman Catholics very bad people ?

SIR EDWIN.

Mr. Skippet's abilities I cannot judge of ; but the application of them is very anti-Christian. As to going into a chapel, under particular circumstances, I should not scruple to do so ; and certainly should never object from fear of conversion, which is at all times a matter of conscience, and never to be lamented when the result of sincere conviction. And to the final question, "are not Catholics very bad people ?" I answer, Gertrude, from my heart, that I do not believe them worse than other bodies ; in which are to be found the wisest and the weakest of men. The Roman Catholics were for a long time the sole guardians of the oracles of God—the Scriptures. Errors, at length, and much corruption, the consequence of them, crept into their church, which were gradually discovered, and protested against. Those who protested against them, separated themselves from the Romish Church, and established a purer one, called the Protestant Church, which, when settled in England, was

denominated the Reformation, and forms a memorable epoch in our history. Besides this, Gertrude, “there were many most excellent and pious men amongst the Roman Catholics, even at the time that their religion was most corrupted, who are, doubtless, now in Heaven, because they were *sincere* Christians. Our duty, therefore, is to be thankful that we are delivered from those errors and abuses, and to desire that others may be brought, likewise, into the way of truth. The clear light which we now possess, Gertrude, was a privilege that our numerous ancestors wanted :—ancestors, I dare say, that you have often at the Castle looked at with *pride*, and many of whom I feel it an honour to be descended from ; because I feel it such to be descended from so much worth as they possessed.

MISS SPICER.

Goodness, uncle !—What ! do you mean to say that our great-grandfathers and great-grandmothers were Roman Catholics ?—If they were so, I wonder that you are a Protestant, since you seem to think so highly of them. Well ; as soon as I come from church, I am de-

terminated to go and examine their popish faces more particularly than ever I did before : aye, that I will,—lords, knights, generals, and bishops, all of them, I declare. But indeed, sir, I cannot but wonder you should be a Protestant.

SIR EDWIN.

—There is nothing surprising in that, Gertrude ; for ever since my ancestors embraced the reformed religion, there seems to have been a general care in the heads of our family to instil into the minds of the rising generations those principles of truth that they rejoiced to have discovered ; and whose example, in my day, I endeavour to follow with my own children.

My conviction, Gertrude, of the superiority of the Church of England over every other establishment, “ has grown with my growth, and strengthened with my strength ;” and so, I trust, will that of my children also. Yet, Gertrude, I should think religion imperfectly and superficially understood, if it did not teach me tenderness and charity to all descriptions of believers, whose lives were exemplary, however I judged their faith to be erroneous.

MRS. ELEANOR.

While we are upon this subject, I will add to my brother's remarks, that, were his temper a more general one, there would be much greater union than now exists amongst Christians; and we should seldom see divisions take place in Christ's church for trifles: and besides, the charitable intercourse of friends, which ought to subsist amongst those "who profess and call themselves Christians," and who are sincerely desirous of the "Bread of life," and of being the disciples of Jesus Christ, has often been the occasion of proselyting many from error to truth. For instance, the good old Bishop Latimer, whose picture in the gallery (in which he is represented walking to the stake, in the reign of the cruel bigot, queen Mary,) is so finely drawn, was a Roman Catholic, but converted to the Protestant faith by the vigilance of his attached Protestant friend, Bilney, who also died a martyr to the same cause.

MISS SPICER.

Well, aunt: all very fine; but I would not have a friend a Catholic for the world; nor

would I go to a Roman Catholic chapel for fear of being turned from being a Protestant.

MRS. ELEANOR.

In your present state, Gertrude, you would gain rather than lose by such an apprehended conversion, in as much as you are now nothing; whereas then, perhaps, you would be something. I believe, however, you would run no hazard of becoming a Roman Catholic, had you been trained from earliest childhood in the Protestant faith, and accustomed, whilst you followed the forms of our blessed Established Church, to prove all things as the apostle enjoins; or, in other words, to examine whether what you profess to believe was agreeable to the Holy Scriptures: in such case, you would naturally "hold fast that which is good," and hence be in no danger of conversion to a less perfect religion.

MISS SPICER.

I grant, aunt, there may be something in what you say; though, I am sure, we are not half so ignorant as you suppose us. But I must still wonder, if one church be better than the

other, why there should be any Roman Catholics left.

MRS. ELEANOR.

Man, my dear Gertrude, is at all times slow to perceive errors ; particularly when he has ever been accustomed to venerate them as hallowed truths : and often, when he does become sensible of them, through the suggestions of pride, convenience, and sundry other feelings that too powerfully influence his corrupt heart, he is reluctant to avow that he is so. Remember, however, Gertrude and Julia, that we have nothing to do with any other mode of worship than our own ; and we should strive to evince our conviction of its superior excellence by the purity and holiness of our lives, and thus recommend it to others.

I hope, this evening, you will not repeat your morning inattention ; and, should you again see your acquaintance, I trust that you will repress any desire to join her to-day : neither gossiping at the church-door, nor idle visiting, is the custom of our house or our parish.

After this conversation, the Misses Spicer followed their cousins, and prepared for afternoon church.

Neither Sir Payne Oglevie's family, nor their visitors, were at church; and, as the Misses Spicer saw no other objects particularly attractive, they behaved themselves with decent attention: and, as soon as the service was ended, Mrs. Eleanor proposed that Mrs. Pontin should drop her at the Hermitage; from which, as the evening would be cool, she would walk home, with a servant to attend her. No sooner were they seated in the carriage, than Miss Spicer exclaimed,—“Dear aunt; preaching and performing, as I have heard some wise folks say, are distinct things. I thought visiting was amongst the wicked deeds of a Sunday; I am certain it is quite as bad as practising.

MRS. ELEANOR.

Ordinary visiting is so; that of compassion, charity, or necessity, otherwise. But the particular visit I am going to make, I have for many years considered as a part of my Sunday duty: perhaps you may like to accompany me, and so judge whether *my* practice be at variance with my theory, Gertrude: if you will do so, I shall be gratified in introducing you to a

highly-valued friend, who will be pleased to receive any part of my family.

MISS SPICER.

Oh! my dear aunt, I shall be delighted to go with you; and Julia, I hope, may accompany us.

The carriage presently stopped, and the little Winters all begged their love to Emily and Mrs. Wyland: Ellen, in particular, requested her aunt to inform the latter that she had learnt perfectly the 139th Psalm, which she had promised her to do. Mrs. Eleanor and the Misses Spicer entered the Hermitage, and were conducted up-stairs by a neat female servant into a spacious bed-chamber. Mrs. Eleanor approached the bed in it, and was affectionately welcomed by her friend, who, supported by a bed-chair, was sitting up, expecting her entrance. Mrs. Eleanor introduced her two nieces, whose countenances were expressive of surprise and disappointment; which Mrs. Wyland immediately perceiving, observed that she hoped her Emily, who would be a more

agreeable companion than she could be, would be soon at home. Mrs. Wyland had no sooner uttered these words, than a venerable-looking parrot in the window cried out, “Emily come,—Emily come.”—“Ah! she will be here presently; Poll sees her faithful friend.”—“Oh, dear!” exclaimed the Misses Spicer; “hear the bird!”—“You may approach her cage, ladies, and you will find her very amusing. Poor bird! she has been the companion of my long confinement: when the windows are closed she has her liberty; but I am afraid, when they are open, of losing her; and now the heat of the weather obliges me to keep them constantly so.”

The Misses Spicer walked up to the bird; and, in two or three minutes, she ruffled up her feathers, and shewed impatience to quit her cage, still repeating, “Emily come,—Emily come.” The young lady so named entered the gate before the house at the instant the bird discovered such particular emotion, and was presently by the bed-side of Mrs. Wyland. Perceiving Mrs. Eleanor Winter, she approached her with a modest ease, expressive

of old acquaintance and pleasure. “Do you not think, dear madam, that my aunt looks well to-day; the warm weather always appears to agree best with her, and tempts me to wish it could be ‘always summer.’” Mrs. Eleanor acquiesced; and then introduced the Misses Spicer, who had rudely turned their backs as the engaging Emily entered the room, and now received her introduction with a supercilious inclination. “You must shew these young ladies, Emily, your birds and plants, which may please them.”—“Most readily, my dear aunt, when I have made my report to you of our neighbours, which,” added she, (addressing herself to the sisters,) “I hope, ladies, you will first allow me to do.” Another inclination of the head; just discernible, Miss Emily took as permission; and thus proceeded: “As you desired, my dear aunt, I first called on Mrs. Tomkins, who, with the children in general, I found very composed, and as well as could be expected after their many days of grief. Mr. Jones went in to Mrs. Tomkins’s house as I came out, and was to stay the evening with the family. I told Mrs. Tomkins you would be glad to see her, when she was dis-

posed to visit the Hermitage. Poor Susan Tomkins, the youngest of the children, still cries a great deal after her father; for she was his pet; and the affectionate little creature would hardly allow me to come away, so soon does she attach herself to anybody who notices her. I next," continued Miss Emily, "went to see Mary Coats; the bark dose has been of great benefit to her: she is better, and in great hopes the ague has paid her its last visit; but she was afraid to go to church to-day, though she greatly desired to do so, as everybody else did. Alice, however, went; and I remained while she gave her mother the best account she could of the afternoon sermon, which, though shorter, was a continuation of the one in the morning on Farmer Tomkins's death. I assisted Alice's memory where it failed, or was not clear; and so, between us, Mary Coats has a pretty good idea of what Mr. Jones has said to-day. My next call was on William Ross's wife; and she was charmingly well, and the baby, the prettiest little creature I ever saw; and it looked so clean and white, that I could not resist staying a few minutes to nurse it. Mary wants nothing, having received an ample

supply of every thing necessary and good, from the Castle, yesterday. I left the other children in the room below, reading the Testament to their father. Mary hopes to be churched this day fortnight, and then to baptize the baby. This concluded my proxy calls, dear aunt; and I could not but remark how sorry every person seemed for Farmer Tomkins."—"Say rather, my dear, for Mrs. Tomkins and her family. He, good man, has made a happy exchange, from troubled time to a happy eternity. But the general regret shewn for his loss is that which is ever felt in a small community, when a useful and pious individual of it is removed; because, whatever his station, he is a public benefit."—"And now, ladies," said Miss Emily, addressing herself to the Misses Spicer, "shall I have the pleasure of introducing you to my family of birds and plants; though I have but a few of the latter up-stairs." Another inclination of the head was the signal for Emily to lead the way. She accordingly did so, and the adjoining apartment, which was yet larger than the spacious bed-room, soon contained the young ladies.

Miss Emily Weyland was about fourteen

years of age, elegantly formed, with a delicate complexion, and a profusion of fine light air ; soft blue eyes ; and, in her air, resembled what may be conceived of one of the Graces ; and, although brought up in retirement, had no marks of aukwardness or rusticity, but was open, modest, and easy ; equally void of that obtrusive familiarity which the diffident or well-bred are alike perplexed to receive, or that abruptness which often accompanies *mauvaise honte* ; and is observable in young persons of retired habits, with quick, strong feelings.

Miss Emily Wyland was the only child of a distinguished officer in the navy. Her mother having died in giving her birth, she was confided to the care of her aunt, who had her carefully nursed under her own eye, at the Hermitage ; and, since she became capable of receiving instruction, it had been the delight of Mrs. Wyland to bestow it upon her ; and, except in the charming accomplishment of music, where alone an auxiliary was requisite, Emily owed every acquirement to her invalided aunt. Emily, being by nature strongly gifted with a talent for music, had made a surprising proficiency with a very moderate application

under a good master: her ear was just, her finger firm and rapid; and she possessed, besides, a voice at once sweet, powerful, and flexible. All Handel's pieces Emily could execute with an exactness and expression, that would have drawn the approbation of that great master of harmony himself. Mrs. Wyland was particularly fond of this incomparable composer's music, which she thought, beyond all other, inspired the mind with devotion and virtue; for, in it, strength and harmony were combined with grace and brilliancy, without any sacrifice of the two former excellencies, a fault too frequently observable in composers of more modern date, who seem to have taken as precedents many of the successful writers in the *belles lettres*.

To a person like Mrs. Wyland, who might be considered as more particularly living on the verge of eternity than the generality of her fellow-creatures, the music of Handel, at all times soothing, was a perpetual delight, and seemed to animate her anew to contemplate the active duties of the Christian life, whilst it reconciled her to those passive ones which were assigned herself. The mind of Mrs. Wyland was cast

in a superior mould ; and, as the severe shock which confined her to her bed, had spared her faculties and general health, she possessed abundant leisure for the education of Emily, and her own devotional and charitable pursuits. She was about thirty-eight, with still a fine expressive countenance, greatly resembling that of Emily. Her bed was placed in front of a large bow-window, the centre part of which opened with folding doors, with ample panes of ground glass to the bottom. A light wire railing was fixed on the outside, but not so as to obstruct the view ; and, to prevent a too strong glare of light directly opposite to Mrs. Wyland, a Venetian blind was generally down to the tips of the trees, so that the landscape before her was so conveniently and exactly shaded, that it could be dwelt upon without violence to the sight on the brightest days. The road through the village was so near, that passing objects were clearly seen, and the country presented a wide and variegated expanse of hill and dale, rich in all the pride of the first days of August.

Mrs. Wyland no sooner felt herself alone with Mrs. Eleanor, than, in the expansion of

her heart, she exclaimed. “How delightful the day, my friend ; how promising the season ! What a prospect of abundance : and what a source of pleasure is the sight with which I am constantly cheered ! The glorious works of God before my eyes, I seem to feel the full force of the poet’s line—

‘ Trees, plants, cooling fruits, and sweet flowers,
All rise to the praise of my God.’

I am myself one of the most favoured of human creatures ; and, indeed, a wonder to myself.” From reflections of this kind, the conversation between these old and pious friends will be readily surmised. They had not, however, exchanged many thoughts, before the young ladies re-entered the room. The truth was, the Misses Spicer filled with secret envy at the appearance and manners of Emily, had no disposition to be pleased with any thing, much less with the objects of her delight and amusement. They made one or two circuits of the room, but refused to give any symptoms of approbation of Emily’s treasures, not even while she exultingly pointed out to them a row of Guernsey lilies, which had been presented to

her by a partial friend, could she excite their admiration, though it appeared to her that these demanded the utmost they could shew. Alas! the glistening beauties of such rare flowers could not warm them into the faintest expression of pleasure, for envy had dimmed even their brilliancy.

Emily was surprised; and the Misses Spicer proposed returning to the parrot, which they graciously remarked, was "the thing best worth seeing." The bird alone was honoured with the approbation of the Misses Spicer, a distinction which they shewed by persevering attempts to irritate her through the wires of her cage.

Mrs. Eleanor observed her nieces, and requested Emily would touch the organ and give them one of Handel's songs from the Messiah. "Most readily," replied Emily; and immediately went into an adjoining room, in which, in a convenient recess, was placed the organ, whose mellow, yet solemn peal, never failed to tune anew the soul of Mrs. Wyland to gratitude and adoration. Emily sang, "Comfort ye my people;" and, on her return to her aunt's room, the Misses Spicer exclaimed, "How

delightfully you sing, Miss Emily; if you can play equally well, I wish you would give us a lesson on the piano-forte, for, of course, you perform on that instrument also. Oh! dear now, do just let us hear you. I wonder if you execute as well as Clara Loveland, dear Clara Loveland: pray, play us one lesson; my aunt, I am sure, will stay to hear you.”—“Any other day, I shall be most ready to comply with your request; but on this I am restricted, as it is proper I should be, to sacred music alone.”—“Bless me,” exclaimed Miss Spicer, “how very odd:” then, rudely turning to Mrs. Eleanor, she continued, “I really think, aunt, you make all your friends of the same way of thinking with yourself.”

MRS. ELEANOR.

You mistake the case, Gertrude: my friend derives her principles from the same source I do; and we understand alike the injunctions of the Gospel.

MISS SPICER.

Yes, ma'am; but I dare say Mrs. Wyland

would not be so unreasonable as to refuse Miss Emily to play a lesson, if she wished to do so.

MRS. WYLAND.

Emily, young ladies, would have no such wish ; and, if she had, I should consider it an irregular, a sinful, one ; and, as such, I should refuse a compliance with it.

MISS SPICER.

I see clearly, madam, that you are exactly of my aunt Winter's opinion, and so I give up the point of hearing Miss Emily play, though I can never believe, but that people may play, dance, and sing too, of a Sunday, and yet be very good.

MRS. WYLAND.

Not very good, Miss Spicer, as we Protestants understand keeping the Sabbath ; and do you not see, my dear young lady, that if one person sung, another would dance, a third play, while a fourth would plead the harmlessness of cards and assemblies. In short, the Sabbath would soon cease to be a day of rest and devotion, if the barriers of gentle restraint, of

which the suspension of these employments of other days is nothing more, were once broken down ; and thus the greatest of all religious institutions, which was made expressly for the spiritual refreshment of man, as well as for the bodily repose of the brute creation in the service of man, would cease to be the privilege of the hallowed seventh day ; in which case, it is pretty clear, we should not only lose our religious pre-eminence, but, as a very great and pious man* remarked, be in danger of again becoming savages.

MISS SPICER.

And pray, madam, may I ask, what you do think it right to do on Sundays.

MRS. WYLAND.

Exactly what your uncle and aunt do. I can add nothing to the practical lesson of their correct example.

MISS SPICER.

Oh ! dear ma'am ! it is so dreadfully dull

* Dr. Samuel Johnson.

and stupid to be thinking of another world ; which must make one, at the same time, think of death,—a thought that always kills my pleasure ; and so I endeavour never to think of it at all, if I can help it.

MRS. WYLAND.

And yet I must tell you, my young friend, that there is really no true enjoyment of this life, without the habitual contemplation of death ; that inevitable and awful event, which must introduce us to another life, where we must be happy or miserable as we have acquired in this, dispositions good or bad.

MRS. ELEANOR.

Mrs. Wyland states matter-of-fact to you, nieces ; and may you begin to feel a desire to practise those habits of devotion and restraint which are necessary to train the best of beings to a happy immortality. Besides, in the course of your lives on earth, there is no foreseeing how long your health may last. Alas ! it may forsake you ; and sickness or affliction may fade the bloom on your cheeks, before Time advances

to throw his shade over it. In such case, without religion, what would become of you?

MISS SPICER.

Oh! dear, aunt; pray do not talk so shockingly: we are quite well now; but if we should become very sick, or break our bones, why surely we could amuse ourselves as well as Mrs. Wyland.

MRS. ELEANOR.

Very certainly, my dear, you could; provided, however, that your mind resembled that of my friend,—not otherwise. She received her misfortune as the chastening of Heaven, and her spirit became resigned to it; and the acquirements of her youth have afforded never-failing resources for the rational and agreeable occupation of her time. My friend will, perhaps, some day, shew you the productions of her pencil, which afford an inexhaustible treasury, and from which she supplies the wants of the necessitous.*

* A lady, well known to the author, adopted this plan for the supply of her charity purse. She never gave away her drawings, but always disposed of them; and, by this regulation of the use of her talents, she had always to give to him that needed.

MISS SPICER.

May I ask,—if not impertinent, ma'am; that is, if not against Sunday rules,—how it was that you came to be confined to your bed; I should so amazingly like to know.

MRS. WYLAND.

And I am very ready to inform you, my dear; the relation will refresh the most memorable epoch of my life, and give me new cause of thankfulness to the Father of Mercies and the God of Consolation.

It is twenty years since I became the tenant of this room, which is so fitted and arranged as to admit me all the comfort I am capable of receiving from a variety of rural objects. I was brought up by my excellent grandmother in this hermitage; and, just as I entered my seventeenth year, my only brother arrived from the West Indies, and took me from her care. Notwithstanding a reluctance to quit my grandmother, I yet felt a degree of pleasure at the thoughts of living with my brother, who had always expressed great tenderness for me, and called me, in his affectionate letters,

his little daughter, for he was many years older than myself.

My grandmother, in parting with me, considered that she confided me to a parent; and o, indeed, my brother proved himself to me. The first winter we spent in London; where my brother shewed me every object worthy of curiosity, and, at the same time, introduced me into company: the style of this, in London, did not, however, please me; and I have often felt myself in the midst of a fashionable party, contrasting the tiresome buz, and senseless ceremony, of the crowd, joined to the frequent entrances and exits of successive guests; with the cheerful and truly elegant society to which I had frequently been admitted at Burrall Castle, Sir Payne Oglevie's, Mr. Loveland's, and other families in our own neighbourhood. At such times I never failed to wish that my brother would add himself to it, and build a house near our hermitage; for I was persuaded that if Burrall was not the "happy valley," it was at least the prettiest and most delightful village in the whole island.

My brother did not altogether reject the idea of realizing my wishes, but, the execution of

them; he judged fit to postpone. The winter being over, my brother and sister-in-law brought me down to the Hermitage, and continued with us during the whole summer, which, I think, was the brightest period of my life; for I was so happy at feeling myself again an inhabitant of this spot, that every object appeared in heightened colours of beauty, and every day seemed to discover new charms in it.

The succeeding winter my brother determined to pass at Bath; but, a short time before we quitted Burrall, my dear grandmother died, after completing her eightieth year, and her long journey of life, almost without sickness: her mind was so strong, and her temper so equal and kind, that she was, to the last, a comfort and pleasure to all about her. She was taken unwell, merely, at dinner time; my brother and I rose to lead her to her bedchamber, and, as she went slowly up to it, I perceived her countenance change, and was alarmed. She observed my emotion, and stopped to address me:—"Compose yourself, my child," said she, gently; "the thread of life is indeed almost spun, and the summons of death is at hand; but it will not reach me

unexpectedly. I am ready to obey it, and am not afraid to die, for I hope I am the Lord's." With my grandmother's faithful Judy, I assisted her to undress and get into bed, when she desired my brother and sister might be called to her: they were so; and, kneeling down close to her, each, with myself, received her blessing. She was perfectly collected and spoke these words, which I can never forget:—"Do not grieve for me, my dear children; I have been a long and favoured sojourner in this world. I have perfect confidence in the mercy of God, through Jesus Christ, and believe that, when this corruption changes to incorruption, I shall be happy; and, I trust that we shall meet again to part no more. "Wyland," continued she, turning to my brother, "take care of Lucy, she knows her duty and loves it yet; guard her youthful heart, therefore, against the seducing vanities of the world, lest she become a 'lover of pleasure, more than a lover of God,' and no increase follow my planting and watering." My grandmother uttered a few ejaculations, and then composed herself to repose; she rested some hours, waked insensible, dozed again,

and expired, without a groan or struggle, in her sleep.

This excellent woman's death was lamented by every person in and out of her family, but I felt her loss as an affliction which I should not soon surmount. Her departure made a sad chasm in our happy domestic circle, and I no longer felt the gratification that I had formerly done, even in my most favourite amusement—the pencil. It was my custom when I had completed an outline of any little landscape that pleased me, to shew it to my grandmother; from whom, if I did not derive the talent that has been such an inexhaustible fund of amusement to me, I at least owed the cultivation of it, and must consider her care, taste, and judgment, as equivalent to genius: if she made any objections, I corrected it; after which I shewed her the piece no more until I had finished and given it all the spirit and life I could, when it most commonly met her approbation;—a recompense that never failed to make me as happy as a golden medal does the most ardent public candidate for fame. She was a great advocate for conveying the ideas of the mind through the pencil, and

would often descant, with the warmth and eloquence of an amateur, on its superiority over poetry. In short, she was in all things the tenderest parent, and so much the partner of my most favourite pursuits, that she could never have lived long enough; and as such, I missed her more than I can express. For some time after her death, and while engaged in work and the recollection of her was for a short moment suspended, I have felt myself in the act of rising to carry her my sketch; and I assure you, my young friends, the recovery from my delusion of memory, was a season of unaffected and hard-to-be-suppressed grief.

As my brother and sister intended to pass the next winter in Bath, they determined on quitting the Hermitage earlier than they would otherwise have done, on my account; thinking that change of scene, or rather, removal from too dear a spot, would assist to recover my usual cheerfulness.

I was extremely pleased with the beautiful city of Bath, and, had not my recent loss sat heavy at my heart, I doubt not but I should soon have grown fond—perhaps too fond—of public amusements, which to young persons,

full of health and spirits, have always a “witchery” in them. The dance delighted me; and although it was not until five months after my grandmother’s death that my brother could prevail on me to go to a ball; yet, this reluctance being once conquered, I found myself ready for another and another, although I had contracted a *cold*, which, in prudence, should have prevented my shewing myself, a second time, in the Assembly-room. But the elastic spirits of youth see “no danger nigh,” unless severe pain be the unwelcome harbinger of it. It was about the sixth or seventh ball that I went to, when I was taken very ill; not however until quite the latter end of the evening. I had danced, with unusual spirit, with a partner who was one of the most agreeable men I had seen; his name—Bruton, a baronet, well known to my brother, and whom I here mention, on account of what afterwards befel him. I had nearly fainted away on being first attacked, and, after recovering sufficiently, was carried by my dear brother, assisted by Sir George Bruton, and placed in a sedan chair and taken home. On attempting to rise from the chair, I fell; and then perceived that I had no use of

my legs. The doctors, in the height of my brother and sister's alarm, were called in, and pronounced that I had received a paralytic stroke. Being, however, on the spot where good advice could be had, and the best remedy afforded me in the warm baths, for my particular and most grievous complaint, my friends hoped I should entirely recover from the effects of it. In this they were disappointed; and, notwithstanding I continued in Bath two years, my limbs remained paralyzed as at first; and my general health grew so bad, that I conceived I should not long survive, and became very anxious to go back to my loved home to die. In this, however, it was the will of my merciful God and Saviour, that I should be mistaken; and my brother, finding that the wish to return to the Hermitage preyed on my mind, determined to listen to my wishes, rather than to the Doctor's given opinions. He accordingly brought me hence, and immediately gave orders to have this room fitted as you now see it, in order that I might be as comfortable as my helpless situation would permit.

My brother remained the whole summer at

the Hermitage ; during which time, it pleased God that I should recover my general health, but all hopes of the restoration of my lower limbs was for ever gone. He left me under the care of my grandmother's faithful household, all of whom were still remaining, and my neighbours took care that I should only know solitude in theory. Your dear and excellent aunt has ever been as a sister to me, and it is to my bodily affliction, that I owe the blessing of her friendship. For five years my brother passed his summers at the Hermitage, but at the end of that time Mrs. Wyland died in childbirth of Emily : my poor brother's distress was very great, and he then came with his infant to live altogether with me, and continued to do so until his little darling could run about and talk. His affairs in the West Indies then required his presence, and he left me, with deep regret, to arrange them ; first, however, making his will, and bequeathing his property to me for life, and afterwards to Emily ; to whom he appointed me sole guardian, that there should be no plea ever to take her from me. My beloved brother died shortly after his arrival in the West Indies, and Emily

became all my own child, and a very dear one she has proved to me; for she more than answers my expectations, and abundantly repays all my solicitude for her advancement in religion, knowledge, and useful acquirements. In short, I feel myself so favoured in every respect, that I never regret what I might have been, so entirely satisfied am I in being what I am. I must not, however, omit to assure you, that the impressions of religion which I had received, and the early habits of devotion that I had formed under my good grandmother, came as the most powerful supporters, when affliction visited me and faded the alluring prospects of youth, when they were probably beginning to appear in too bright and fascinating colours.

Poor Sir George Bruton, who was my last partner in the dance, took his leave of us, in perfect health, a week after I was attacked. A few days afterwards, the papers announced his sudden death, by the rupture of a blood-vessel. We all regretted the loss of this promising young man, and how truly did he and I prove the truth of a Scripture assertion,—“That one shall be taken and the other left.”

And thus, my young friends; would I persuade you before the world has fast hold of your affections, to “seek those things which belong to your peace,” amidst all the changes of this mortal state. Learn, from your aunt and uncle, that practical piety that so eminently distinguishes them, and which is the result of sound doctrine, heartily embraced by the mind; and begin with fearing the Lord, and keeping his commandments.

The Misses Spicer, who had been some time warmed into a respectful attention to Mrs. Wyland’s recital, now thanked her for it, sincerely regretting it was not longer; and requested permission, with a newly inspired humility, to visit her another day, when they would hope for the pleasure of hearing Miss Emily play on the piano-forte. This was readily granted, and Mrs. Eleanor, observing the return of the servant, now rose to take her leave, and with the tender expressions of kindness, which ever soothe the afflicted as often as they are repeated by a sincere friend, took her leave.

The Misses Spicer could not refrain from

their astonishment at the ease and tranquil happiness of Mrs. Wyland, or at Emily's loveliness and musical talents; concluding that the former must certainly be the very best woman in the world. Mrs. Eleanor took this opportunity of justifying her visit, which it was easy to prove, was clearly one of Christian love and charity, if not one of absolute necessity.

Arrived at home, tea was brought in, and afterwards Sir Edwin read a portion of the Scriptures, which he explained to his family, and concluded the day by evening prayers,—a day felt by every inhabitant of Burrall Castle, one of joy and gladness.

After breakfast, on Monday morning, Mrs. Eleanor proposed to her nieces, to take a lesson in music from their cousins' master, which they consented to do; and thus two hours were likely to be redeemed from listlessness: and, after the children had practised their hour at the piano-forte, the utmost portion of time allowed the daughters of Sir Edwin Winter for the acquisition of this fashionable accomplishment, and which, it must be remarked, was found fully sufficient for the object, as each practised the prescribed period with a lively

attention ; she further proposed to her nieces, the Misses Spicer, that they should go to the school-room and see the little girls play a geographical game, as was their custom on particular days in the week. To this proposal the Misses Spicer replied, that they hated geography, and had the " Traveller at home," which they always thought a monstrous hum-drum stupid thing ; and, were of opinion, that a game at Loo, or a pool of Commerce, would be a thousand times pleasanter. This objection caused a little conversation, which shall be given in due order.

MRS. ELEANOR.

I wish to remember my promise to you, dear girls, but I cannot offer to amuse you with cards, since we do not allow their use amongst our children ; and, consequently, they are really quite ignorant of them.

MISS SPICER.

I am sorry for it, aunt ; but why should you not allow their use ? I am sure they are amazingly pleasant, and there is no harm whatever in them. To be sure, they would be rather in-

insipid if people were to play for nothing; but that we never do; and, indeed, we always play for a stake proportioned to our purses. When we happen to be rich, you know, we play for a good deal, and when we have been rather extravagant, then we play low; but it is all the same, and the winning and losing keeps one alive.

MRS. ELEANOR.

The latter part of your observation you must amend, Gertrude; for, I am persuaded, the losing has a contrary effect upon you. But you ask, “why do we not allow cards?” and then assert, that “they are harmless.” We, however, are of a different opinion, and prohibit them for this reason, and because we believe them pernicious, and a great waste of time. They give no ideas, no knowledge, and occupy those hours which might be employed in acquiring both. In short, a person rises equally from a victory or a defeat at cards, a mere blank; and this, only supposing that he may have made the most harmless use of them, which is, playing without a stake: but, if this be not the case, his state is by no means so negative; for, with the stimulus of gain, cards bring forth and

cherish some of the worst passions which can deform human nature, at the head of which is avarice, and its numerous retinue of vices.

MISS SPICER.

Well, aunt, but all the world play at cards; and, as my cousins must in time grow up and go into the world, how amazingly awkward it will be if they then refuse to do so, because they do not know hearts from clubs. I am certain they will be put down at once as Methodists; and would not that be shocking? We should be quite ashamed of them.

MRS. ELEANOR.

Unless you mean by Methodists, fanatics or mad-men,—by no means shocking; and Methodists, in the correct sense of the word, I must heartily wish they may deserve to be called. But, in answer to your opinions and apprehensions on this subject, Gertrude, I have to remark, that, if your uncle and I are permitted to be the guardians of his children, they will never be in the predicament you suppose; for the card world never was, nor ever will be, our world; and, even should any of them move in

a circle different from our hopes and expectations, we flatter ourselves that they will, nevertheless, be preserved from the fashionable folly of misspending their hours at cards, through a rational disapprobation of them,—the effect of early conviction, that they form an employment unworthy reasonable creatures, who are training for eternity, and commanded to redeem their time. At the same time, I calculate that the pursuits our little girls now have will create such habits of thinking, and form such habits of action, as to make them despise so poor an occupation as cards. They have their books, and work, and music, and drawing amongst them. They have their gardens abroad; and the various objects of our little world—the village, the aged, the sick, with children of different ages, growing up under their observation, to interest their feelings and excite their exertions in different ways to promote their welfare and improvement. And I hope, my nieces, to see you yet with a taste for similar pursuits; for, be assured, that my sister's children, as well as my brother's, must always be dear to my heart, and their progress in virtue and knowledge equally desired by

me. But, suppose you now accompany me as I proposed, to see your cousins play their game. I think you will find it less dull than you expect; and, I assure you, it is not the "Travel-ler" they play: that I consider a trifling game, and rather calculated to perplex than to improve. It is a desultory mass of information, which, as it presents nothing systematical, is not calculated to answer the object upon which it professes to instruct; to those, at least, who have the rudiments of geography to learn.

The geographical games we use are planned by a very ingenious Frenchman,* whose labours have greatly facilitated the business of education; and who, in his divisions and subdivisions of the earth, always presents a connected body of information. I shall, to-day, propose to the children the New World; in which, my dear, you gave a proof to Miss Smith that you had something to learn. I blushed for you, while I admired the modesty of my young friend, who felt, but did not expose your ignorance on the occasion. We will sit by with

* Gaucher.

our work ; and, in the afternoon, if you please, we will take a drive over to Beech Grove, and drink tea with our neighbour, Mrs. Smith.

MISS SPICER.

Oh ! my dear, dear aunt ! now you are so good ; and we will take our music books which we brought with us. Well ; we shall have time enough to practise, and see the children play too.

Any thing that promised an opportunity for the display of the musical talents of the Misses Spicer, raised their spirits and their vanity together ; and they would gladly have declined observation of the proposed game, of which they were yet wholly ignorant, to have passed the remainder of the day in practising passages, in order to astonish their new acquaintance at Beech Grove. Their aunt, however, being so kind and attentive, they were induced to suppress their real wishes, and followed her, with as little reluctance as they could assume, into the school-room. There they found the children seated round the table, at the head of which was Mrs. Pontin, with a nankeen bag on each arm ; on one was marked " America," on

the other, "counters," and the folio volume of Gaucher's Geography before her. Roger, on the condition of his remaining quiet, was, as an indulgence, permitted to stand by and see who won. The countenances of the youthful group discovered as much interest and earnestness as those of certain combatants for the honour of intellect, at the game of chess. Mrs. Eleanor, and the Misses Spicer, seated themselves conveniently; and drew out their netting, the latter first asking for how much they played a game, and what sum their counters represented. This question occasioned some further debate.

MRS. ELEANOR.

The counters, Gertrude and Julia, represent honour and credit; and, you will see, answer the purpose of keeping up the attention of the children, by marking their progress as effectually as if they represented crowns.

MISS SPICER.

How dreadfully stupid to play without money! I declare, I should not care whether I won or lost, and could never feel the least amusement. We always play for money at

backgammon and draughts, as well as at cards ; and Julia is very rich, for she has won a great deal from papa.

Oh, dear ! the hope of winning, and the fear of losing, is so delightful ! I should hate most abominably to play at any thing for counters, though I love games,—play games, that is,—to my heart.

MRS. ELEANOR.

I believe, Gertrude, you labour under a mistake ; you should rather say, you love money to your heart. For, surely, if you took pleasure in any of the games you play, they must give you entertainment in themselves ; but, as they do not, depend on it, an evil principle stimulates you, and avarice is taking deep root in your heart.

MISS SPICER.

But how is it possible, my dear aunt, to be satisfied with mere counters ?

MRS. ELEANOR.

By substituting good principles in place of bad ones, Gertrude. Honor and credit is the

reward of superior skill and attention, and which has had power to animate the exertions of the learned, the brave, and the good; and you may read that, amongst the Greeks, the most polished people of antiquity, a simple wreath of natural evergreen was the sole recompense adjudged the victors, in the different games in which that people delighted to exercise their skill.

MISS SPICER.

Oh! I suppose those old-fashioned creatures were different from us, and unacquainted with the ten thousand sweet pretty things which money could purchase, or they would not have been so silly as to have contended for any thing less, but—

MISS WINTER.

I beg my cousin's pardon for interrupting her; but pray, aunt, do you remember how very sullen and unhappy the Misses Freeman were, when they passed three days with us last winter, because we did not allow them to play at cards.

MRS. ELEANOR.

Indeed I do : and remember further of these children, for they are nothing more, that our acquaintance, Miss Brownlow, also invited them to pass a week of their Christmas vacation with her at the Parsonage ; and was afterwards in no slight puzzle in what manner to amuse them ; for they disliked reading, hated working,—could not play on the piano,—were tired of walking,—and never danced without music. In short, they kept their chairs, like a couple of mutes at a funeral, until Miss Brownlow desired they would propose in what manner she could divert them. They at once asked for a pack of cards : one was given them, which in an instant operated like magic, and dissipated the gloom of the young ladies ; and they sat down with as great eagerness to win each other's money at “ Hunt the knave out of town,” as if it had been the sole delight and business of their lives.

MISS SPICER.

You are very good, my dear aunt ; certainly very good, and should have been a bishop, at

least: but, if my cousins do not begin their game, we shall not have time to practise our passages, and we can hear another day more of your wise reasons for disliking and banishing dear cards from the Castle. Yet I cannot help thinking how different mamma is. She loves cards dearly; and I cannot think that you, in your heart, are such a terrible enemy to them. Nobody is but the *vile* Methodists: they, to be sure, have *red-hot* hatred to them. Now, there is a family whom we do visit, and they never play at cards; and you can have no conception, aunt, how dull and stupid an evening at their house is: for my own part, I had rather go to a funeral at once: and mamma says she only does so once a-year, because they are considered a *wonderful clever* family; but she never intends more than an annual visit; two of these we have paid with her, but happiness defend me from a third. Mamma says it is creditable to be known to be acquainted with such sort of *cried-up* folks, and therefore the yearly visit is a penance to be borne; but I do not agree at all with mamma on this point, and think that 'tis quite time enough to be acquainted with such mighty good people when

one gets to Heaven,—if, however, such a place there be.

MRS. ELEANOR.

Oh! Gertrude; you shock me: however, for the present, I will only combat with you on that which is trifling, compared to what you have to learn,—to believe. My unalterable opinion is, that there is much harm in cards; and I never knew them liked in two instances without a stake of money, which is generally more than people can afford to lose, and, for that reason, more than they should desire to win. Besides, the body is enervated, and mental improvement suspended, to say the least, while sitting at cards.

MISS SPICER.

But what, aunt, would you have people do to amuse themselves when they meet together? sit like statues, and look at each other's grave faces?

MRS. ELEANOR.

By no means; that is quite unnecessary for intellectual creatures: on the contrary, I would have them do many things. Is there not mu-

sic, walking, and conversation, with the dance sometimes for the younger visitants? Surely, from such sources, amusement should not be difficult; and those who should feel at a loss are much better at home.

MISS SPICER.

But, aunt, old people cannot play on the piano, and may dislike to listen to music: they may be unable to walk, and not understand how to talk cleverly: and, as to dancing, that is quite out of the question. Pray now, what can such people do to amuse themselves in company?

MRS. ELEANOR.

The case of such persons marks them fit only, in my opinion, to stay at home, and not to seek amusement beyond the society of their own families; for, indeed, they must feel very dull and vacant any-where else. Wisdom can never have been sought by them; and, being unobtrusive, she will not be found just when wanting. But, if people have been taught that time is the most precious of all things, there is no danger that they will grow old—destitute of

rational sources of amusement. But, alas! as it is to be feared that there are too many living, who have not been so happily instructed, and as society is at present constituted, we must allow the use of cards to such as are too old to acquire better habits of amusement; but with this positive condition only, Gertrude, that there should be no stake of money: and, could so much as this even be effected, I cannot but think that cards would soon become *obsolete* and give place to a more rational and healthful mode of passing time.

MISS SPICER.

Were your plans, aunt, to take place, there would be very few card-parties in town or country, and half the world would be moped to death.

MRS. PONTIN.

Could your aunt, Miss Spicer, be allowed to legislate for a short time in the world of fashion, there would be a reformation in it, certainly. Parties would, indeed, be lessened: but, as "talking is not always to converse," so neither is much company crowded in a room,

society,—which, in its true state, would be improved by the substitution of a more natural and better bond of union than cards : and then, as superior motives would induce association, the community would be more virtuous, and thence happier.

MRS. ELEANOR.

The improvement of the mind, or the health of the body, should always be the object of every species of recreation ; and it is proper to consider, that, whatever may be termed amusement, is an unprofitable mode of passing time, which does not produce advantage to either one or the other : and I hope, my dear nieces, that you will, ere long, be of this opinion, and enjoy even a geographical game, as conducive to mental improvement : but I will not longer detain you, my dears, and so begin.

The children, accordingly, commenced their game, which was concluded within the hour, and won by the youngest sister, Anna Winter, to the great satisfaction of Roger, whose favorite she was. The Misses Spicer sat with tolerable patience,—Julia only now-and-then

exclaiming, "I am afraid we shall not have time to *practise* our passages,"—or, "What a good bit of netting I have done;"—sentences not indicative of a very strong attention to what was going forward. At length, being released from their constraint, they jumped up, hoping they had time enough to practise,—declaring Cramer was a sweet, a *nice* composer, though fond of making people fag at *cramp* passages; and concluded with presuming that *they* should be the best performers at Beech-Grove in the evening.

MRS. ELEANOR.

Gertrude and Julia, I will not further interrupt the children's attention, as they have more business to perform; and in which, I hope, they will acquit themselves as well as they have done on the New World.

Mrs. Eleanor took her leave; and the Misses Spicer flew off to *practise* their passages,—in such good humour, that they quite forgot their mother's cold, and never uttered one regret at the prospect of continuing another week at the Castle.

The evening arrived ; and the Misses Spicer at length made their appearance, dressed in the extreme of a bad style of fashion, and with all the pains of finished coquettes. Mrs. Eleanor was dissatisfied ; but, unwilling to discompose her nieces, contented herself with observing, that she supposed they mistook the sober tea-party they were going to join at Beech-Grove for a ball,—that their dress might be very appropriate for opera-dancers, but was unbecoming gentlewomen ; and she, therefore, requested they would go and change their thin, short, and scanty frocks, for others of a more modest fashion, and more suitable to a private country-evening visit. This request was made in accents so gentle, that the young ladies, ashamed to dispute the point at this juncture, withdrew from the presence of their aunt to comply with it ; expressing, however, to each other, what miserable dowdies their poor little cousins would be made, and what a pity it was that their aunt was an old maid,—the circumstance to which they attributed what they termed her whims and strange taste. On their rejoining her, Mrs. Eleanor commended the improvement they had made, and observed

that they then looked like gentlewomen, and that she hoped their behaviour would in no instance contradict their external appearance.

The distance from Burrall Castle to Beech-Grove was three miles, and a beautifully diversified ride all through Sir Edwin's demesne and woods. The former had been always receiving additional improvement by the constant residence of successive proprietors of the estate. The woods were the finest imaginable, and stood as monuments of the attention of past generations to the interest of posterity. They consisted principally of oak; but were varied, as the soil required, with beech, ash, elm, and pines,—all of which had been planted by Sir Edwin's great-grandfather, who lived to see them grown to great luxuriance, and many of them to maturity, and give place to other plantations, which considerably increased the value of the estate; many hundred acres of which were considered a sterile and unproductive soil until he planted them with particular timber-trees.

A walk or drive through these woods was always a treat to the little Winters; for there numberless objects presented themselves to the

children, who were early accustomed to admire the beauties of creation, and upon which their aunt or Mrs. Pontin usually descanted to them for their amusement and improvement. Nothing, however, in these charming woods was in the least agreeable to the Misses Spicer, who had no idea of being entertained by mere rural objects: so that the enchanting works of Nature were really to them a “universal blank;” and, in truth, dress, music, dancing, and netting, were the sole acquirements to which they attached the least importance, or were ambitious to obtain. But these were *accomplishments*,—the currency in modern society. A shady wood was not the theatre on which the Misses Spicer could display their skill, and showy acquirements; but they rejoiced in every little opportunity of company that allowed them to do this; considering every one that occurred as so many public practisings, which served to prepare them for the great and *final* display they meant to make at the momentous epoch of coming out. The young ladies made the utmost use of their time in passing through the woods, by practising, in profound silence, with their fingers on their

mute music-books, those passages of difficult execution and little harmony, on which, in imagination, their fame depended. In vain the intelligent Mrs. Eleanor endeavoured to awaken in them some interest for the different objects as they succeeded each other. Even the grace of the numerous squirrels bounding from tree to tree, in the full enjoyment of food and liberty, was deemed unworthy the observation of these young ladies, who merely remarked, "What little queer stupid animals the squirrels must be to feel happy in those horrid dismal woods, that were only fit to hide robbers and murderers!" and, "What a way Beech-Grove is from Burrall,—quite a journey!"

This easily-accomplished journey, however, brought them to the mansion of Mr. Smith at Beech-Grove, where they were received with an air of ease and respect by Mrs. Smith. The usual compliments were scarcely ended, when their circle was increased by the clergyman of the parish, with his son; and soon after by the arrival of a neighbouring gentleman and lady, with their two daughters, and a nephew about fifteen years of age, dressed in the naval uniform, who was enjoying the happiness of a

visit to his family and guardians, after having signalized himself in a recent engagement,—a circumstance which had so filled the neighbourhood with the fame of his valor and intrepidity, as to threaten no small danger to the best qualities of his head and heart, from the constant incense of flattery offered to him. The Misses Spicer, with such an audience, were overflowing with good humour and self-complacency: and, when music was proposed by Mrs. Smith, and seconded by the rector and his son, as well as by the son of Neptune,—some little altercation, by way of etiquette, took place between the Misses Spicer and the Misses Chapel, who should play first: this was occasioned by the fear the youthful competitors felt at each others' skill. The Misses Spicer had boasted that they practised five hours a-day,—a declaration that most seriously alarmed the Misses Chapel, who confessed that they would do the same, were they not restrained by their mother, who followed Mrs. Eleanor Winter's plan, and limited them to time: in this, however, they congratulated themselves in being more indulged than the Misses Winter, their mother allowing them two hours instead of one, which

would give them a chance of excelling those young ladies.

The point was, at length, settled, and the eldest Miss Chapel sat down to the instrument, and performed, from memory, a fashionable sonata, for which she was greatly applauded, and, it cannot be denied, with justice,—since she gave all the effect to the piece of which the composition was capable. Miss Spicer was afterwards called upon to take her seat ; but, oh ! —dismay ! this young lady's confidence had entirely forsaken her, and she not only declined to play next, but to play at all,—assigning, as a reason why she did not, that Miss Chapel had performed the very piece she brought to play, and any thing she should attempt after it would sound flat. In short, no persuasion was able to prevail with either of the Misses Spicer to touch the instrument ; for, in truth, both equally despaired of the neat and rapid execution of Miss Chapel, and were alike in the predicament of the Queen of Sheba, “ who had no spirit in her” when she surveyed the splendor of Israel's most renowned king. The habitual rudeness and abruptness of the Misses Spicer broke out with their “ vanity and vexa-

tion of spirit." Mrs. Eleanor felt chagrined, but refrained from any observation which might occasion a reply from their undisciplined tempers, and so tend to aggravate their behaviour, and draw more remarks upon them; and contented herself with soliciting little Miss Smith to favour them with a lesson. This well-bred child said she was a young performer, and feared she did not play well enough to amuse the company, but would with pleasure do the best she could. As a willingness to oblige never fails to go a great way towards pleasing in the performance, all were prepared to be satisfied with her effort; and, when she had gone through, in good time and execution, one of Latour's light pieces, well calculated to gratify the unscientific lovers of harmony, they were delighted with it.

The evening being fine, Mrs. Smith proposed to the juvenile part of the company to walk round the garden and pleasure-ground, to which they all gladly assented, and followed Miss Smith, who was desired by her mother to pilot them. She was immediately obeyed, and the group were soon in the garden. The presence of beaux induced the young ladies to

wear good-humour on their countenances, though these gentlemen had received certain impressions from the behaviour of the Misses Spicer, during the music scene, not favorable to the belief that it was altogether habitual to them. They walked about the garden, then in the pleasure-ground,—watched the fish play in the well-stocked pond, and afterwards observed the curious collection of shells, which were tastefully disposed in the decoration of a grotto, and in which the Misses Spicer expressed their wish to live. The object that next caught the eye of Miss Julia, was a small white spire amidst a clump of evergreens on a mount, a few yards from the opposite side of the pond: a race was now proposed, in order to ascertain what it could be, but to this the Misses Chapel at first felt disinclined: the force of example, however, which the Misses Spicer gave in the true spirit of hoydens, overcame their faint scruples, and away they all ran, except Miss Smith and the sailor, who walked quietly after them, the latter declaring his intention to remain by the pilot. They found their companions in full discussion, and the Misses Spicer in *raptures* at the object that

had attracted their attention ; which was a spire about five feet high, elegantly formed of fine white marble ; on one side was sculptured a spaniel, and underneath it an epitaph, in poetry, descriptive of the best qualities which could adorn a human creature ; the extravagance of the conceits, and the redundancy of epithet, in this effusion, evidently declared the production of some of the poetasters of a certain school.

The delighted and ill-judging Misses Spicer imputed the whole device of the object before them to the taste of sweet Mrs. Smith. Misses Chapel qualified their admiration by observing, that they thought it went too far, considering the subject was only a dog. Miss Smith said, her mamma had frequently said that such a monument of folly required some explanation as an apology for its being in the pleasure-ground ; and added, that her papa found it when he purchased the estate, and had given his word of honour, which had been required of him, that it should not be removed, and most people thought it looked pretty at a little distance amongst the evergreens.

The Oxonian, equivocal in his own observa-

tions, qualified the different opinions of the young ladies with so much petty subtilty, that it was not easy to discover his real sentiments on the subject in debate; and thus the lovers of picturesque scenery and nonsensical poetry, were perfectly satisfied with the pertinency of their respective remarks.

They next espied a pleasure-boat, and at the same time the sailor proposed to examine if she were sea-worthy; and if so, to take a row. All advanced towards it, and the sailor leapt in, inviting the party to follow him. Miss Smith suggested that the ladies had better first consult their friends; but this opinion the Misses Spicer disregarded, and fearlessly stepped into the boat. The Oxonian went next, and his example decided the Misses Chapel to do the same; but Miss Smith, not having hardiness sufficient to risk displeasing her mother, by doing what she doubted the propriety of, remained alone on the bank. The Misses Spicer were quite riotous, and jumped about from side to side, to the no small terror of their female companions; a behaviour they continued for the half hour they were on the water. The Misses Chapels then, instigated by a se-

cret and laudable dread of their parents' displeasure, proposed that they should join Mrs. Smith's company in the drawing-room; and, becoming importunate as their fears increased, the gentlemen rowed them safely within a few yards of the bank: when the Misses Spicer, in derision of the alarms of the Misses Chapel at the rocking of the boat, both jumped suddenly on the edge of it, which occasioned so great a jerk, as to tumble them both into the water, though not to upset the vessel. Danger of drowning there was none, so the ladies recovered their feet and carelessly walked on the firm gravel bottom to the bank, as if they had been merely bathing. As soon as Miss Smith saw her visitors slip, she ran into the house and communicated the accident to her mother's maid, who returned with her to the pond, just as the young ladies had landed. They accompanied the servant, and were supplied with dry clothes, while the remainder of the party joined the company in the drawing-room. Miss Smith took her dripping guests into her mamma's dressing-room, where they were equipped, as well as they were able, from Mrs. Smith and her daughter's wardrobes.

While they were dressing they scanned the furniture of the room; some elegant and ingenious trifles struck their fancy; the first of which was a row of Mandarins, making the motions of obeisance by clock-work; and next, some fillagree ornaments in ivory, of exquisite workmanship, and different from any thing of their mother's, raised *sweet* Mrs. Smith yet higher in their estimation. The pictures afterwards drew their attention, and at once inspired them with the determination to get a new drawing-master. They then proceeded to examine the subjects of them. The first drawing was a cottage, which seemed situated amidst every thing romantic and beautiful in nature; hill and dale, wood and water, were judiciously blended and disposed in the landscape. "Oh! dear," exclaimed Miss Spicer, "this must be the loveliest cottage in the world; it seems an earthly paradise, I should delight to live in it for ever and ever. But tell me, you love, what heavenly spot is this picture, and who drew it." "My master," replied Miss Smith, "drew it, and it is the cottage of my grandfather, in which my mother was born; and she is so fond of it, on that

account, that, she says, it is the first piece I am to copy, when I can draw a landscape well enough to attempt it, and then I shall try the other views round the room, as I am farther qualified." The Misses Spicer proceeded to examine these in succession. The second was another view of the same cottage, in which a group was observed in different attitudes:—an old man leaning on a spade, with a female figure by his side, and both earnestly looking at a young woman, surrounded by children, in the act of stooping, as if placing something on the ground.

The third picture represented a handsome house and demesne, with a lady at an entrance-gate of it, talking to a young man, who points to a countryman carrying a package; and the fourth was another view of the same house. "What views are all these?" said Miss Spicer to Miss Smith. "They are subjects," replied the latter, "taken from some family circumstances which my mamma can explain to you, ladies; and I dare say she would be happy to do so some other time; but I should not do it properly, and besides, we are expected below. I told mamma your accident, so that

she has prepared your aunt, who will not, therefore, be surprised at your absence. "Bless me, Julia," said Miss Spicer; "now I think of it, do not those pictures remind you of one of our good aunt's stories the other day?"—"I declare, Gertrude, I was thinking the self-same thing: you mean the woodman's daughter. Well, I thought she had made the story herself, but now I am certain she has read it in some book or other, since these pictures are clearly about it." Full of this persuasion the young ladies overlooked the information given them by Miss Smith; and followed her, with their curiosity roused, to inquire of their aunt upon the subject of it, whose inventive powers were already fallen in their estimation. They joined the company; and continued, on the whole, amused and satisfied, until the carriage was announced for their return home. As soon as they were driven off, the following conversation took place between Mrs. Eleanor and her nieces.

MRS. ELEANOR.

I hope, my dears, you have been pleased with your visit this afternoon?

MISS SPICER.

Oh! aunt; I assure you we have been delighted; and how glad I should be if the Smiths lived near us: what a charming place they have. I should think Mr. Smith must be *monstrous* rich; and he is really a *nice* man, so mild and pleasing in his manner. I protest; I think I could fall in love with him; and, as for Mrs. Smith, she is an enchanting woman; and the little thing I love too; though not exactly pretty, she has fine dark eyes, good even white teeth, and not a bad complexion, if not quite so ruddy. I vow and declare, I think mamma's neighbours at Marton Vale are downright hum-drums to the Smiths; except, indeed, Sir Oliver Flippant's family, Lord Varnish's, Admiral Landlove's, and General Beatwell's; but these are very fashionable people indeed.

MRS. ELEANOR.

Mr. Smith's family is truly an amiable one, as you will be convinced when you know more of it. I value their acquaintance, and consider Mr. Smith an acquisition to the neighbourhood. He is not, however, so rich as you

imagine ; he has, indeed, a genteel fortune, but not a great one ; yet, as you mix in the world, you may know many families who have not half the air of ease and liberality which Mr. Smith has, though possessing treble his income. This arises from the attention Mrs. Smith pays to the order and regular disbursements of her family, from being well served, and always living in the country. A steady course of expences is the consequence of being stationary. A family that is so, and well managed at the same time, can afford to be hospitable ; and has greatly the advantage over the one that quits, with feverish restlessness, its comfortable country residence to grow poor at expensive watering-places.

MISS SPICER.

Notwithstanding what you say, aunt, it would be abominably stupid to be always at home, like the rooks and rabbits ; and I hope you won't persuade mamma not to go to watering-places ; for, after we come out, I have set my heart on going to Brighton, which, I

am assured by the Flippants, is the most heavenly place on earth.

MRS. ELEANOR.

My sister knows my opinion, Gertrude, on the subject of "migrating from inland to the coast;" and, you may assure yourself, I shall not mar your plans of happiness by my unwelcome advice: there is a season, my dear, when admonition should cease, and that is, when it is no longer regarded, and is therefore unproductive of good. You may, however, my dear, have different ideas of pleasure, by the time you go into company.

MISS SPICER.

Ah! no, aunt; that is impossible, for pleasure at one time must be pleasure at another, as black to-day is black to-morrow: of this I am certain, and so am happy to think you will never say a word to mamma against Brighton. But, dear aunt, you must know we saw, in Mrs. Smith's dressing-room, some pictures, beautiful and lovely drawings as you ever saw in all your life; some of which reminded Julia, as well as myself, of your amusing story of the

woodman's daughter. To tell you the truth, we thought you had made that story, but now we are certain you only read it, and we wish to be informed in what book, since we are determined mamma shall buy it, if it cost fifty guineas, for the pictures would certainly be worth them.

MRS. ELEANOR.

Could Miss Smith give you no information on the pictures?

MISS SPICER.

I believe she said something about them, but I declare I did not hear what, for I was in such raptures with them, and the beautiful little filligree boxes. Oh! dear, how I longed for them!

MRS. ELEANOR.

I will tell you, then, what may possibly surprise you. Those pictures describe particular objects and subjects in the story I told you of the woodman's daughter.

MISS SPICER, (*interrupting.*)

Oh! that we have found out, aunt: but in

what book is the story? that is the point on which we want to be informed.

MRS. ELEANOR.

In no book, Gertrude, I assure you, will you find the story of the woodman's daughter. I told you truth, when I informed you, that I drew very little from my own imagination, that my outlines were taken from nature, and that I merely filled them up, and allowed myself little latitude in their embellishment. Yes, Gertrude, the woodman's daughter is a story of real life, and Mrs. Smith the heroine of it.

MISS SPICER (*interrupting.*)

Yes, yes, aunt, that we must also know: but the name of the book with the true story, —where can I get it, for I must and will have the pictures?

MRS. ELEANOR.

They are, I repeat, in no book, Gertrude: Mrs. Smith, of Beech Grove, is the woodman's daughter, —was Mary Alsop, —is the heroine of the tale I told you. I am explicit, and

you must cease to be incredulous. I have heard more than once every circumstance of her life ; and, you may be assured, I have narrated all with fidelity.

MISS SPICER.

Aunt, you amaze me ! you astonish me ! Mrs. Smith of Beech Grove the woodman's daughter ! Well, this is most surprising, 'tis like magic ; and, I declare, I shall begin to believe Cinderella and the Glass Slipper, and that there must be such things as fairy godmothers.

MRS. ELEANOR.

Believe, Gertrude, with your whole heart, in an overruling Providence, " who casteth down and setteth up whom he pleases," and you will not think it necessary to have recourse to fairies as agents to effect great changes ; but you will soon be convinced, that the " Most High, who rules in the affairs of men," orders all the revolutions of which you hear or read, as happening in the world, whether they be in the lot of private individuals, or of kings or empires.

MISS SPICER.

Now, aunt, you do really put me in mind of Mr. Grace talking of Providence, which papa says, (and he is reckoned a very clever man,) nobody knows any thing about; and that the Methodists are always prating about religion: so much so, that he hates the subject; and, I am sure, so do I most heartily. Give me the fairies; I am sure there must be such things, and I only wish I could get acquainted with a kind one.

MRS. ELEANOR.

Gertrude, your levity grieves me: and your ignorance and prejudice on the most momentous subject to your happiness, afflict me still more. I shall not cease to pray for you; for, at present, it seems I can do nothing more for your highest interest. I would, however, have you dismiss from your mind every thought of the existence of fairies. "To have Heaven for our comforter, and the Holy Spirit for our guide," is far superior to the assistance of genii. "Fairies and genii were the offspring of the vain imaginations of men in the days of unqualified corruption and ignorance. Spi-

ritual intelligences there are, Gertrude, innumerable, both good and bad; all, however, under the control of God, and have no affinity with the kind of beings you suppose fairies to be.

MISS JULIA.

Pray, dear aunt, don't be so grave with us, after we have been so pleasant. Well, I am full as much astonished as my sister at your explanation of the pictures: yet, now I recollect, Gertrude, there certainly is something rather coarse and vulgar-looking in Mrs. Smith too; and Mr. Smith smiles, and says little, because, perhaps, he does not know what to say.

MRS. ELEANOR.

Give me not cause to regret my candour by again indulging prejudice and illiberality. You have expressed yourselves pleased with correct, good people, and I have felt gratified at what I believed your discernment of their merit. Mrs. Smith has not a trait of vulgarity, and Mr. Smith is a man of polished manners. He is the youngest son of a man of family, large fortune, and character, who bestowed on him

the best education, which he has improved by intercourse with the world, at home and abroad. You may, therefore, rest assured, that Mr. Smith's reserve is the effect of dignity and wisdom, not of shame and ignorance. I hope you may become yet better acquainted with him and his family, a circumstance from which you might derive considerable advantage.

MISS SPICER.

I shall like to be so very well, if other genteel families notice them.

MRS. ELEANOR.

Pray, Gertrude, do not assume such supercilious airs. Other genteel families are proud to be acquainted at Beech Grove, for Mr. Smith is select in his society; and is, therefore, courted: and, if he will notice you, you will have cause to consider that he does you a favour.

MISS SPICER.

As to that point, aunt, we may possibly not agree; but, altogether, we spent a pleasant evening; we had great fun in the garden.

The Oxonian was such a nice young man, and a bit of a dasher, between us ; and the sailor, though a quiz, (don't frown, aunt, at the word,) was agreeable enough for a tar. But I cannot, and never shall forgive that Miss Chapel for playing my best piece. However, the next time, I will play first, and perhaps I may frighten her in turn : in short, I am resolved to fag night and day until I can play, without fault of a note, "the Ne plus Ultra ;" and let her execute that if she can. Bless me, I wonder how mamma does ! how very foolish of her not to go home and be nursed ; not that I care for staying at the Castle, and especially as my dear aunt has promised to amuse us.

MRS. ELEANOR.

I am not without anxiety on my sister's account ; and to-morrow, please God, I will send over to Stowell to know exactly how she is.

MISS SPICER.

Bless me, aunt, I really think that is papa's groom that has just passed by us ; what can he want !

Miss Spicer put her head out of the carriage-window, and called, as loud as she could, "Thomas, Thomas:" the delightful stillness of the night was favourable to the conveyance of sound; and, Miss Spicer's voice quickly reaching his ears; he rode back, and, in answer to the questions anxiously put to him by Mrs. Eleanor, and impatiently by her nieces, replied, that he feared his mistress was very bad indeed. He then gave a letter, and said he should return in the morning to Burrall, but that he must now go on to Marton Vale, to inquire how the young squire, Master Francis, was, as his mistress had been very uneasy about him. Mrs. Eleanor put the letter in her pocket, and desired Thomas to bring her nephew to the castle in the morning, for that he had better, she said, remain with his sisters until the return of his parents.

Thomas then pursued his journey, and the ladies were presently at home. On their arrival, Mrs. Eleanor sent the Misses Spicer at once to their rest, apprehending that the letter she had received might disquiet them for the night. On reading it, she found that her sister's disorder was become most alarm-

ing, the inflammation on her lungs having rapidly increased, and refused to yield to the usual applications; that the physicians declared, there was feeble hope of recovery, and that she was very desirous to see her sister. Mrs. Eleanor lost no time in communicating this letter to her brother, who was retired to his closet, where he was always to be found from ten to eleven o'clock. They agreed to set off immediately to Stowell. Sir Edwin then ordered the carriage, with two pair of horses; and Mrs. Eleanor left him, while they were getting ready, to make some arrangement with Mrs. Pontin respecting her nieces and nephew, who was to join them in the morning. After this they set off in composed, though depressed spirits, and were conveyed safely to Stowell in little more than an hour.

The clock struck twelve just as they entered the inn yard; and they were, at once, shewn into Mrs. Spicer's apartments. The heated and fatigued countenances of the female attendants denoted the critical state in which their mistress lay; and who, her distressed husband soon informed them, was not expected to live many hours. The arrival of her brother

and sister was announced to her by Mr. Spicer, and they shortly afterwards placed themselves at her bedside. This truly afflicting scene required all the fortitude of Mrs. Eleanor and Sir Edwin. Poor Mrs. Spicer lay in a state of suffering, conceivable only by those who have witnessed the symptoms of her terrible disorder. Her face was swelled and flushed to a livid hue; her eyes sunk and heavy, and her breath so obstructed, as to render it impossible for her to whisper beyond a monosyllable at a time, and that with the greatest exertion. She pressed Mrs. Eleanor's hand, and uttered, "I shall—die——I shall—die——Frank—girls—must die:" nothing further escaped her lips. Mrs. Eleanor, perceiving her quite sensible, though dying, thought she might wish to see her children, and asked if they should come to her?—"No—no—hurt—dears." Sir Edwin exerted all his firmness: his own yet recent loss, naturally occurred to his feelings; but, amidst the present melancholy scene, without the usual consolations which reflection and tranquillity brought. He rallied himself, however, as well as he could, and, imploring the support of Heaven, proposed to

Mrs. Eleanor that they should join in prayers round the bed of their evidently dying sister. Mr. Spicer, in the hope of alleviating his sufferings, and of a respite for the life of his wife, of whom he was extremely fond, was eager to join in the form of prayer, though, accustomed as he was to think of religion but as the dreams of the superstitious, or the contrivance of priestcraft, the true spirit of it he could not feel. Sir Edwin read with great fervency the Communion for the Sick, and then, pressing his poor sister's hand, who returned it with the words—"thanks—good," left her to the care of Mrs. Eleanor, and retired with the half-distracted Mr. Spicer; to whom Sir Edwin judged it necessary to administer some drops of laudanum; but, being unable to prevail with him to go into a bed, he insisted on his reposing on the couch, by the side of which he determined to sit and wait the event of the night. Mr. Spicer, so far governed by the assumed authority of Sir Edwin, soon fell asleep, while the latter continued in fervent prayer for his suffering sister, until a gentle rap at the door summoned him away, just as the day began to dawn. Mrs. Eleanor, with a faltering voice,

announced the expected and melancholy event, that Mrs. Spicer was no more. She continued sensible to the moment of her dissolution, and, by repeated pressures of her sister's hand, discovered the consolation she derived from her presence. But speech was torture, and Mrs. Spicer evidently reserved her feeble proportion of strength for those sad exclamations which were connected with the objects nearest her heart—her children, “must die,—Frank—my girls;” and with these words on her lips she expired.

It is easy to imagine the feelings of the family in attendance on this melancholy occasion. Mr. Spicer slept until the morning, by which time Mrs. Eleanor and her brother had recovered some firmness and tranquillity; so that they were enabled to break the afflicting event to him, and to use the persuasions of piety and affection, in order to bring his spirit into a calm state. At first, better success attended their efforts than they expected; but the sight of the corpse, which he rushed impetuously to behold, threw him into a paroxysm of grief, in which he wept bitterly. Sir Edwin did not attempt to check his tears, judging

that Nature would thus relieve itself ; and that becoming exhausted by his emotions, he would submit to the gentle hand which was ready to direct him. This was exactly the case, and the impatient and proud Mr. Spicer yielded himself to the easy guidance of Sir Edwin Winter.

The following day Sir Edwin proposed to Mrs. Eleanor to return to the Castle with Mr. Spicer, and that he would follow with the body of his sister as soon as it could be properly enclosed ; and that it should receive its last coffin at the Castle, and rest there for interment.

This being agreed upon, Mrs. Eleanor and Mr. Spicer left Stowell. The family at the Castle were prepared for the event of death, and the appearance of Mr. Spicer and Mrs. Eleanor confirmed its certainty. The Misses Spicer hung on their father's neck, and sobbed out, " Oh ! poor dear mamma, if she had not gone to those vile races, or if she had but returned home, she might have been alive and well !" and then, with a half frantic manner, they vowed they would never go to a race as long as they lived. Mrs. Eleanor felt the utmost compassion for her sister's children, and knew

that their present state of feeling was not one in which, had she even been able, it would be proper to attempt any rectification of their religious principles, or to shew them the error of seeking in second causes, the origin of this severe affliction, which called forth all the instinctive fondness of greatly indulged children. To sooth them was her present duty; and her efforts to do so, in some degree, succeeded; she designed, however, at a convenient season, to make every advantage of the awful stroke of Providence, for the benefit of her poor unhappy and neglected nieces.

Mr. Spicer's grief was constantly renewed when he saw his little boy, whose attachment to his mother was unbounded; his sorrow was affecting, and his sister's love seemed to receive a new impulse, by the death of their parent; and they caressed him, as the dearest object of her affection. Frank Spicer deserved their love, and was a very fine boy of nine years old; for, notwithstanding the ill-judged partiality of his parents, he was yet well tempered and agreeable; a proof how much he owed to the disposition Heaven had given him, since the corruption of human nature seldom fails

to turn early and unqualified indulgence to sad account. As to education, however, Frank Spicer was in the high road to have his alphabet to learn, at the time he ought to be ready to engage in the affairs of manhood !

The following day to that on which Mrs. Eleanor and Mr. Spicer returned to the Castle, Sir Edwin arrived with the body of Mrs. Spicer, which, after some days, was interred in the vault belonging to the Winter family in Burrall church.

After the distressing event of the death of Mrs. Spicer, and the melancholy scene of the funeral, nothing could induce her husband to think of returning to Marton Vale, or of staying in England : he accordingly sold the former, and determined to return to his estate in Jamaica. He felt that action was the best defence against the depression and vacuity which hung about him ; and, in fact, he had no other refuge than this step promised. His recent loss had occasioned a temporary disgust to the gaities of fashionable life ; and, though he entertained the highest respect and esteem for the friends he found at the Castle, they were yet so dissimilar to him in their principles and

consequent habits of thinking and action, that he felt them uncongenial associates.

Mr. Spicer found no difficulty in prevailing on Sir Edwin Winter and his sister to undertake the care and education of his three children : they gave him their promise ; and, as on all other occasions, they made a conscience of their duty.

Frank Spicer, with his cousin Roger Winter, was immediately placed under the worthy and judicious Mr. Partho ; and the Misses Spicer had their choice given them, either to go to Mrs. D——'s, or to remain under the immediate care of their aunt Eleanor, and finish their education with their cousins, under Mrs. Pontin. They did not hesitate on the choice allowed them, but gladly remained at the Castle. The prejudice imbibed from their mother against all schools most happily deciding them in this determination. Here, then, for the present, we must leave them ; and, at the same time, our readers,—the latter, we presume, in full conviction, that these young ladies had very much to learn and to correct. We indulge the hope, that an account will be given how they conducted themselves in their

new home, and what rectification of principles and manners was the result of their residence with their uncle's family, under the judicious superintendence of their excellent and affectionate aunt, Mrs. Eleanor Winter.

FINIS.

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